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WOMAN

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BY

VANCE THOMPSON

AUTHOR OF "EAT AND GROW THIN," "THE EGO BOOK," ETC.

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

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TO

MAUD THOMPSON-BOHN, PH.D. (Yale)

MY DEAR SISTER:

May I place your name at the head of this book? You have given your life to the cause of Woman; you proved her right to stand where man stands in the world—his peer in science, in scholarship, in civic administration; and then you went out into the dust and heat of the industrial world to rouse your comrades in humanity to a realization of the new destinies that await them. Had I not been three thousand miles away from you when this book was written it had been a better and wiser book; more sincere it could not have been; and you, I am sure, will see how much of my heart is in it. And so, dear sister, I take the liberty of inscribing this little book to you—with love, and with the deference due one who has done things, while I, in a more fleeting way, have only said them.

Your affectionate brother,

VANCE THOMPSON.

PREFACE

FOR years I have tried not to write this book.

Doubtless some easy-going wag will express his regret that I did not go on trying not to write it; but I do not mind the perfusorial wags. It is the exact truth that this book got itself written almost in spite of me. It came in a sort of inevitable way—riding down my pompous masculine convictions, prejudices, social habitudes. Going about the world, in man's light-minded way, I met many women and gradually I began to see there was something the matter with them. It made no difference who the woman was or what her way of life was; there was something the matter with the brawny woman pushing out the boats at Trondjem and with the little perfumed cat curled up in a Venetian boudoir. And one day I had word with a woman-advocate. It was in the Palais de Justice in Paris—there in the Hall of Lost Footsteps, as we strolled to and fro. She was

good to look at, as she walked there in the Portian cap and gown of law, for she was a large, dark, hot-tempered woman, with tragic, quarrelsome eyes. One thing she said was this:

"Life is a conspiracy against woman."

And I took the words away with me. It was not that I believed them—they were smoky rhetoric; but they voiced, with deep discontent, the tragedy of woman; and they made for thought—for questioning, indignant thought that would not let one be.

And so this book got itself written.

It is an affirmation and it is a recantation, for I, like every male of the species, thought it rather clever (in the spotted necktie, yellow-spat period of life) to crack mean and silly jokes about women. And if I have said less of the old tragedy of woman than of her swift-coming triumph it is because she is already at the door—and the door is swinging wide. There is a kind of timidity which refuses to follow the logic of events into a proximate and prophetic future. I lack that discreet timidity. Also, while this book is, I trust, characterized by serene impartiality and prudent moderation of judgment, I will frankly admit that I have

never been (when I knew I was on the right side of a good cause) an opponent of emphatic statement—*fortia dicta.* Of course I do not believe in writing at the top of one's voice—or pitching the note too high; but when a thing is to be said it should be said in the way that carries the greatest weight of sincerity. The woman question is too big a thing to blink at —or to talk about in whispers.

Scribam quod res est, said Gaffarellus; and I, too, have tried to do it—to write the thing that is and, without fear, the thing that is to be.

VANCE THOMPSON.

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WOMAN

I

THE WOMAN AND THE WORD

YOU know the little man in Blake's drawing, who stands at the foot of a gigantic ladder, reaching up to the moon, and cries: "I want!"

He was the symbol of humanity; he was its synthesis; and over the din of the ages his harsh little voice alone has been heard. To-day you can hear a new and shriller cry. It is the voice of Woman. And her "I want" is growing into a mighty "I will"—a cry in which there are intimations of victory and menace.

"I want" and "I will"—they are leonine words.

If they mean no more than that Woman has come to realize that she is an individual human being, whose life is her own concern, they mean a great deal; but the words carry a more for-

midable significance. It is not only her own life—her own extraordinary beingness—she is concerned with; she proclaims her concern with men and children, with the state, with civilization, with the future of the race. Her "I want" does not stop with liberty—she tried for that once in a mood of wild and splendid outlawry of which you shall read. The liberty she demands is conditioned—as man's is—in civic and racial activities, responsibilities, capacities, powers. And this is a new thing. It is not alone that she has proclaimed herself *capax imperii*—fit to rule; it goes farther and it goes deeper.

Woman has changed her attitude toward herself.

She is asserting her right to shape her life from within and not to have it shaped for her from without. And this is important, but of greater importance—of towering importance—is the fact that she has changed her attitude toward the universe. She no longer stands, with bent head, in front of the life-sphinx, whispering, like poor Shelley, "I bear what I can and suffer what I must." She is demanding her share of the world—demanding it valiantly,

vehemently, at times truculently. And, in a world where most of the work is muddled and ill-done, she demands the big things for her share. Moreover her "I want" has swelled diapasonically into a stark and final "I will."

These are the facts. There is no use blinking them.

The light you see along the horizon is the dawning of the Woman's Age.

Whether you like it or not is a matter of supreme indifference—the movement, steady as sunrise, implacable as evolution, will go its appointed way. Whether you like it or not Woman is the Paladin, enormous and strong, of the ideals of to-morrow. She is the future; she is the future home; she is the future state—for she is in the majority both in numbers and in common sense and she has withal a kind of civic integrity, which may be unscrupulous, but which makes nevertheless for victory. Hitherto it has been in her weakness as a citizen and a national unit that her strength lay—for her strength was that of a courtesan, a parasite, a favorite; but in changing her attitude toward herself she has changed, also, her attitude toward man, toward society, toward the state.

She is a citizen; she is a national unit; and in a near future she will say, with candor and with truth: *"L'étât—c'est moi!"* She will be the state, not in any arrogant and one-sided way, but she will be the state precisely as to-day she is the home—because her high moral grace makes it beautifully her own.

I say this is coming; the light is on the hills; and he is a timid prophet who dare not—when he sees the dawn—foretell the sunburst and the noontide. I say it is coming; and it is coming whether you like it or not, my brother—bombastic and sacrosanct mammal that you are!

(Here I should like to pause and remark to a certain kind of man that there is no use on earth in his howling about it, like an inferior sort of male devil.)

The Woman's Age is coming and, after the mess we men have made of things, it is coming none too soon. Surely we have not made such a success of organizing human society that we can insist upon monopolizing the work. The youngest sociologist, of Princeton or the Sorbonne, will tell you as much; and even the old male of the tribe, with broken pride, is begin-

ning to admit it to himself. And for you and me the only sane, foresightful thing to do is to look the fact in the face—study it—try to understand its meaning and its portent.

The truth is a grim one; for good or ill, my brothers in masculinity, we are up against the cogency of womanhood.

(Which is at once terrible and mysterious.)

It is mysterious and terrible; and I, it may be confessed, have stood back—perhaps like most men—a trifle dazed, a little terrified at this strange, new, vehement thing which has come upon us. I think we have always had a secret fear, deep-buried, hardly-recognized, of the cogency of womanhood.

For my part I will frankly admit I tremble whenever I see a woman carrying anything on a tray—even a mound of tea-cake.

Inevitably, in spite of myself, I think of the Head of John the Baptist.

(You will remember it took two women to get this head separated from its body; and that, later, there were several women who sought for it in the frightful *cloaca* into which it had been thrown—women who wept with love; and I am inclined to believe that in this

symbolic story there lies some profound and awful law of womanhood.)

There is in all of us, males, a little of this fear of the Woman and the rôle—a rôle of wanton charm and willful destruction—she was forced to play in the old, bad drama of life. Is it any wonder, therefore, we look forward to the new rôle she has taken up, if not with terror, at all events with a kind of wary disquietude?

I repeat it; we are confronted by the cogency of womanhood; we are confronted by the Woman, who has changed—who is changing—her attitude toward herself and toward the universe; and we shall have to make a revaluation of many of the dogmas and half-truths and creeds we have been jogging along with, so jauntily. Do you see how big the thing is? In order to bring it home to you I will state, calmly, that wars have ceased to be important; that greed and materialism have ceased to be important; that all the conflicts and crimes and vices of our wretchedly organized society have ceased to be important, when compared with this gigantic and genetic event—Woman's entrance upon a career of civic and national rule.

It is her "I want"—it is her "I will"—that is infinitely important, incalculable.

Wars do not matter because, in her day, if she wants them stopped they will be stopped. The male has no love for peace and I am not sure he would be any better if he had. Peace is no more an ideal for men than obesity is for women. So long as the male is permitted to have his way he will go on fighting—but just how long that is to be Woman will decide. It is precisely the same with the thing called (by silly people) white slavery. Men will never put an end to it; but there will be an end of it when Woman's word has weight in our social organization. And so these things—and the other dark immediate problems of the day—are of relative unimportance beside the overwhelming significance of this new fact: the Rise of Woman.

What does it portend?

What is the meaning of it all?

What is she, this Woman, who carries within her, mysteriously, the seeds of life and (*quod gravissimum est*) what world will she make for us to live in?

Query after query comes rushing toward one,

open-jawed: Who is she? Whence came she? What does she want? Where shall we come in? What about the male—and his child? What about that wild, sweet thing, love? And its dirty little sister? Not until we have found some kind of an answer to these questions shall we be able to set about the work of revaluing our changing world. For the world, my brother male, is changing I assure you—the androcentric world is changing for good and all. Let us face it quietly, sanely, with courage, with a sense of expiation, with a hope of purification, trying to get the best out of it, working with this law of evolution and not against it. Above all let us try to find out what it means and who this Woman is, since, by a formidable predestination of destiny (*lex fati*), she has come out of her zenana and taken us in hand. That these things, or some of them, might be known I have written this book.

(I know a dark symbol—a symbol obscured in petticoats; it was Wells' portentous heroine, who had *Pro Bono Publico* engraved inside her wedding ring; and this makes for thought and deep foreboding.)

BRUSH AND STAR, BEING THE MYSTERY OF SEX

Who is she?

Alfred Henry Lewis, who was (as he used to say) a "he-writer," answered the question somewhat in this way: "Females—they is no sort o' doubt they is the noblest and most exhilaratin' work of their Creator." As you will observe there is in it a little of the half-sneer of the male; withal it does not carry us very far. I should like to go back a bit further.

The next time you are taken to an hospital, ask the man in charge to show you an "electrostatic machine"—as he will call it—for in it you may see this mysterious Woman of which you are reading, at the point farthest back to which one can trace her in a material world. (I could trace her farther back still, into worlds of subtler vibration and higher spirituality, but it would take you into a theology for which you are not ready in this incarnation.) You will observe that the positive discharge of an electrostatic machine is a shapeless, brush-like spray. There is your man in the making. He never gets away from that first pattern laid down for him; it is scattering, cloud-like, confused; and

it is he. Now the negative discharge of an electro-static machine is star-shaped. And this first feminine symbol is not only shaped like a star —it is equilateral, geometrized, clean of line.

There is your Woman in the making. No more than man does she ever get away from the pattern, drawn there in gleaming, electrical lines. Your man is still a cloudy creature, all scattering spray and impulse, given to romantic adventures in war and trade, to flagrant heroisms for things he calls honor and pride and love—given to all the boyish, vagrom, visionary things of building and exploring and destroying. And still is your Woman star-shaped, equilateral, affirmed, geometrized, methodic—with a hard ravenousness for practical, clean-cut, tidy things. Even when she was no more than the germ of Woman, a mere electric spark, she did not sputter. It was the male spark that did the sputtering; and it has been sputtering ever since. (Being sentimental is merely another way of sputtering.) Now the truth upon which I shall lay immense emphasis in this book is that Woman is not sentimental; she is hard, clear, defined. Her radiance is linear. Man with all his innate craving for sen-

timental muddle has succeeded only in persuading her to wear a little sham sentimentality, as she wears (to please him) feathers in her hair. It is a concession she has made to buy peace from the romantic brute. It is one of many concessions, compromises, treacheries to self into which she has been forced in an androcentric world. The real Woman, now emerging, is different. She tends toward higher things—*ad altiora*.

Spray and star; male and female created He them.

It was a tentative opinion of the biologists that life began as female and that the male, appearing much later in biological time, was one of nature's afterthoughts—a sort of second intention. The error arose from a misunderstanding of those earlier forms of life, which were once loosely described as a-sexual. As a matter of precise fact they were bi-sexual—brush and star polarized in one tiny organism. In one tiny organism, in one microscopic cellular house, they dwelt together ("even as you and I"), played upon by the sexual urge of opposites, which runs through all life.

It runs through all life. You may see it in

single cell life—in the motile protozoa or discrete cells, such as the leucocytes of the blood. These little objects consist of a single cell. Yet each cell has a mind of its own. Its movements are not at random. In plainer words in this single cell judgment and will—the two poles of the ego—are already developed. Star and brush. From this fact has come the modern theory of speculative science (first stated by Sir Roland Ross) that "the mechanism for deciding conduct" in living things which possess volition is likely to reside in a single cell; and this single cell placed in the brain or principal nerve-center is called the Ego-cell. It is you; it is all you have; it is the eternal monad—brush and star, male and female.

It runs through all life; the existence of sex in every atom of matter is an acquired fact; radium during the process of disintegration emits "rays," which are merely the outward and visible signs of the breaking up of the various atoms—and the Alpha ray is male and the Beta ray is female. And so it was of the forces the earlier biologists spoke of as a-sexual. They were not one and they were not two; they were bi-une. Life "budded" from them,

but it did not "bud sexlessly," as the old scientist said; it was born of that urge of opposites, which you see sparkling in the two magnetic poles.

(There still float and dive little creatures, like the rotifer, in which this bi-une "self-creative" power persists as of old.)

The memory of this pristine bi-sexual unity has never quite died out of the human race. There is more than fable in Plato's description (it is in the "Banquet") of the old androgynous race. You may remember it. The form of each individual of the race was rounded, "having the back and sides as in a circle." A man-woman; round like an egg; its manner of running, even, was circular; and it was terrible in force and strength and of prodigious ambition —for, mark you, it united the urgency and energos of both sexes. Indeed so fearsome and conquering a thing it was that Zeus, in terror, "divided it in two"—and so Plato found it: mankind divided, unhappy fragments of humanity, each half seeking the other half that had been shorn away from it; whence came the cries and adventures and errancies of lovers in the world.

It was an idea upon which Plato mused tenderly.

He would look down into the inorganic and the low organic forms of life, seeking the embryonic individualism, which is striving there to perfect itself—and must strive through long relentless ages. He would look at the men and women about him—spray and star—violently incarnated in separate bodies; and thus he would come to dream of the ultimate bi-une reconciliation, when sex shall have played its part in the drama of incarnated life.

But this is a platonic fancy which takes us away from the physical plane of evolution. The point I would make here is this: When the two principles of life separated along the line of sex they made an absolutely equal division of the bi-une force.

The urge of one pole is no stronger than that of the other.

(Were the smallest atom, the tiniest electron, to lose its equal and eternal balance, male and female, the material universe, stars and constellations and planetary worlds, would tremble and grind and, at last, crash down into tumultuous confusion—cosmos become chaos.)

There was a primal equality; there is virtual equality in polarized mineral life, in vegetable life, in every form of life that crawls on its belly, or on multiple legs, that swims or flies or gallops on all-fours; in all life there is virtual equality—with certain slight variations that balance each other, for if in one species you find the male stronger, hairier, more gaudily feathered, you may set over against him the deadlier female of another species. Only when you come to man and woman do you find one sex forced down into inferiority both physical and mental —and if I do not add moral it is because woman has found there a refuge and a zenana of her own.

Now if we are in any way to understand Woman, the future she is claiming, her "I want" and her new and glorious "I will," we must try to discover the sources of her decadence, abjection, enslavement and perversion.

Broadly you may say that the female animal differs from the male animal only in sex and in those sex-distinctions of hair and plumage that make for sex attraction. Always the brush and the star; but these sex-sparks are housed in animal bodies that leap and run and cry aloud and

are, alike, individualized. It is only when you come to the sex function and the things which concern it that you find, in the animal world, any difference. You see these beings—tiger-being, lion-being—each an individual; they are tiger-kind and lion-kind. At seasons of the year tigerhood flowers into male and female. The antique law of race preservation—the antique urge of brush and star—commands and insists. Then re-arises the law, equally ancient and inexorable, of tigerhood, of self-preservation, of individual affirmation, development, evolution, and they who were male and female become tiger—splendidly tiger—nothing but tiger.

Do you see the analogy?

Only among humans is this natural play of law broken in upon; man alone has prisoned the female of his race in an eternal and monstrous zenana of sex.

She is Woman.

She is humanity with a star in her.

She is a human being.

She is not female—save for swift, fleeting moments of sex-attraction, save for patient mysterious hours of race-production; and man (alone among males) has thrust her into a

prison of sex—alone among animals, he has degraded her into a female thing eternally sexed. The man has done this thing. Through the ages he has labored at this bad business. He has condemned her to one function. He has thrust her into a sex-coop, precisely as a Strasbourg goose is shut up in a coop and gorged until it is all liver—and then having made her all female, he calls her "a female"; and then having made her all sex, he calls her "the sex."

There is something monstrous, cynical and unclean about it.

One advantage he had over her; at certain periods when she was concerned with her business of race-preservation he had the advantage of physical strength.

And he used it—dear Lord, how he used it! I shall have more than a little to say of the use he made of his occasional physical superiority in making a work-slave of the female of his kind; but at this stage we are interested in his Strasbourg-goose methods. There is a bitter cruelty in the German method of forcing a goose to become all liver. There was unspeakable cruelty in man's method of forcing the Woman to become female—all sex and eternally

sex. He lengthened her hair and shortened her legs; he fattened her back; in fact by sexual selection, he so deformed and enlarged her sex-distinctions that in the ages she began to lose her human form. She became smaller, weaker, rounder; she almost ceased to be Woman—she was a female; she was, in a word, a Strasbourg goose.

She was a sex-thing.

She was kenneled and hareemed in sex.

It is not only with women man has shown this perverse predilection for deforming the human body. He has carved the human male into opera singers and door-keepers for his seraglia. In the middle ages a strange fondness for monsters woke in him and he created them by the hundreds. Societies existed for this bad work. There is a history of their doings, and ghastly reading it provides. They created—for the amusement of weary kings—dwarfs and monsters of a hundred sorts. In the courts legless monsters rolled along the floors; dwarfs squatted near the throne; giants dragged their feebleness about; humanity—carved and distorted into every grotesque form infamy could imagine

—postured to amuse the half-witted duke and the idiot king.

In much the same way he made Woman abnormal; he femalized her.

As a Woman, as a human being, two laws lay upon her as upon man: self-conservation and race-conservation. In other words, one of her duties was to preserve the race. Through her body of womanhood, as through a gate, there was to pass the entire human race—the endless and mysterious procession of babies. Yes; but her second duty was equally imperative; that was her duty to herself—to preserve and protect her individuality; to be victoriously woman, as man was emphatically man; to perfect her humanity. And it was upon this duty man trampled.

"It is your business to occupy yourself with the endless stream of babies," he told her, back in those days of swamp and fen and cave; and Napoleon in his day could think of nothing else to say to her.

So he said: "Go on, have babies!"

"But I can't be having babies all the time," she protested.

Then the man reflected; he saw she did in-

deed have hours and days sexually unoccupied; so he made a harlot of her.

That was man's Great Invention.

Lion roaring in the blue night never thought of it; pig squelching the mud by the riverhead never conceived so foul a thought. Man invented it. He took a human being and made it all sex—precisely, I repeat, as a goose is made all liver. Of a glorious human thing—glorious as lionhood or birdhood—he made a thing exclusively feminine; he made the Eternal Female. (There was found in latter days a sex-maniac of a poet—it was Goethe—who could bleat like a Thuringian buck *"Das ewig-weibliche zieht uns hinan"*—which gives one a picture of the male, goatish but true enough in its way.)

I say man made the human woman, in so far as he could, into a long-haired, short-legged, fat-backed female and condemned her to one function in life; and then finding that mere maternity did not take up all the time of all the females, he invented harlotry. Lest this creature—shaped, trained and set aside for sex—should waste her empty hours he invented harlotry, an infamy of which the animal world never

dreamed. And could not dream, in its serene sex-sanity. That thing he did. Your Congo chief—so I am informed by Mr. William Stamps Cherry, the African explorer—has solved the problem of utilizing the idle hours of his females, when they are not busy with their sex-functions, in a nicer way. He fattens his females up and uses them as cushions to sit on—or mattresses to sleep upon. In which there is a measure of clean-mindedness; and tolerable comfort.

And Woman did not protest?

She has never ceased to protest; in her worst hours of degradation—femalized, oversexed, Strasbourg-goosed—she has fought, as best she could (God help her!), for self-conservation, for her individuality, for her innate, eternal and vital right to be not a female but a Woman—for her sacred share in humanity.

I am going to tell you, in this book, of some of her battles; but one thing first——

MOTHER-LAW AND HEARTH-ORDER

To-day Woman is fighting the old battle to reaffirm her individuality. She is seeking to

find a way of adjusting herself to the new conditions of life; she is looking for a satisfactory way of living which shall be determined from within and not from without; she is striving to be a Woman—to get out of the sex-pen in which she has been cooped. Therefore the first thing she has to do is to reëstablish sexual normality. She has to dethrone the old poets who go about bleating that the "ever-female is hauling them on"—whither is it hauling you, Caprinus? She has to bring back into the man-made world a sense of sex-proportion. Always she has waged war against sexual laxity and promiscuity; and that war she must win. She must bring back into the human world the sex-sanity of the animal world. Man will not do it—he will hinder rather than help. Why, indeed, should he assist in destroying this Strasbourg goose he has so patiently created in the ages? And so you see Woman fighting this battle alone. Think of it—and of her monstrous handicaps! Body and mind have been soused and triturated in sex; almost every weapon of the human being has been taken from her; the Woman has been starved, dwarfed, deformed, that the female might prevail; and it is this

little un-weaponed thing that must conquer the Goethe-like male, the *homo caprizans,* and beat him back to his stall and his virtue; she it is who must proclaim, for him as for herself, the sacredness of sex-relations—the imperious sanctity of the sex-relation between man and woman, upon which depend the health and beauty of human life and the safety of the race.

And Woman will have won nothing until she has won her sex-victory—until she stands up a human being with a sex-function, to be sure, but not a sex-function in human form—as the old male would fain have her be.

You are fond of definitions, I believe. Very well: Man is a human being called upon now and then to fulfill certain male functions necessary for race-preservation. And Woman? Of course there is an amazing difference. Woman is a human being called upon now and then to fulfill certain female functions necessary for race-preservation.

And that is all.

Now how came this predominance of the man over the woman, the father over the mother?

Before facing the question of Woman's present-day problem—her battle and her imminent

victory—it is imperative to see how she was taken (as she emerged from the serene democracy of the animal world) into slavery, both sexual and economic.

She was, it is probable, the first animal that ever stood erect and walked on its hind legs. I do not fancy she did this because she was pulled up by high spiritual desires to face the stars and the mysteries that lurk overhead. Rather, I think, she walked on her hind legs because she found the easiest way to carry her young was to hold it in her front paws. And so, standing, she invented humanity—and the Obscure Powers, watching the evolution of that tiny monad, the soul, hailed her victory. And they crowned her—with a crown of thorns—saying: "Your reward shall be to bear the burden of humanity; you shall be the continuity of the race." (And because she stood erect, thus severing herself from the four-footed race that stares at the earth, thus proclaiming a new humanity, the Obscure Powers laid pain upon her, like a diadem—lest she forget!)

Biologically she is the race.

Therefore students, looking back, have argued that there must have been, in early days, a soci-

ety in which she was paramount. And they picture a matriarchal life, in which a system of "mother-right" prevailed over the entire globe; and they will tell you that the first social organization, the first state, was a woman and her children, regardless of paternity. This theory has got itself stated in many a cloudy and pompous book—buttressed up with statistics from Polynesia and the Dravidian tribes of India and what not. I do not think you need take it seriously.

Statistics are the last resort of the sophist.

When his argument breaks down, when it sags in the middle and wobbles at the ends, he can always buttress it up with columns of statistics and cross-timber it with footnotes in Aztec or Maori. This is the favorite method of young professors who have not yet learned how to think and of old journalists who have forgotten how.

Now in spite of the immense amount of loose writing on the subject of matriarchy there is no sure evidence that mother-right ever prevailed as a system. Wherever you get a trace of it in early tribal life you find some one Woman who

was strong enough to have her way and lay her will upon the little community.

Out in the Mojave desert, one night of fierce heat, I came into a savage little settlement of desert-rats, bad men, ruffians and wastrels. There were shanties and shacks for housing them; there were saloons, gambling-hells, dance-halls—with poor, tawdry, bloated dance-girls—for their amusement. A population of evil men. They came out to stare at me. Suddenly they gave way. There strode forward an old woman, a huge old woman, big of shoulder and fist, a formidable and valiant virago, with forbidding brows and eyes of flint—the ruler and *imperatrix,* undefied, of this little matriarchate of the desert. These men cringed before her. She dominated them as a whipper-in dominates the pack. But this was merely the individual triumph of a towering personality. Just such a thing doubtless happened in many a primeval camp. In other words, wherever you come upon vestiges of matriarchal society you are standing upon one of the sacred battlefields, where Woman fought—perhaps with momentary success—for her rights as a human being. "Among the Yuchis and Chetimachas; among

the Dyaks, Minahassers, Pádam, Munda-Kols, Santals, Teda we find matriarchy"—only you don't; you find Woman valiantly trying to establish an equilibrium of the positions and duties of the two polar halves of humanity. She did not succeed, save here and there as an individual (like my hag of the Mojave desert) or as a family group or as a sept of fugitive impermanency. And it is because she did not succeed that the Woman of to-day is carrying on her back a dead load of patriarchal superstitions, prejudices, authorities, tyrannies, absurdities.

Always she struggled; there was heroism, not victory.

The first stage of her humanity was not imperial matriarchy.

She was a slave-thing, then as now; she was under the fell rule of a savage chief—the starkest and fiercest male in the tribe. What of liberty and equality she gained was gained in two ways. Something came to her from those fierce revolts of which history speaks and of which you shall read. More came to her from her influence over the children; round her and round her maternal love they grouped themselves un-

til they—the weaklings—were strong enough to pull the tyrants down. And then, too, there were the other women to aid her. There were her hearth-mates. They formed a league against the stark male, who ruled the little sept, lurking in fen or cave. And you can readily see how there lay in this hearth-group the germ of social life—of the home—of the state—of the empire.

One thing the star within her cried aloud for —order.

There must be hearth-order that at due hours the children might be fed and warmed. The men took life in their usual sputtering way. They slept when they were sleepy; washed when they were dirty; fed themselves when they were hungry, like animals. I think Woman's first achievement was to get them to do things with some degree of regularity. (It is true man has not quite mastered the lesson yet; and you will find him, his *energema* sputtering out over a billiard-table, while the dinner burns.)

Woman invented order.

Out of the instinct of the Woman for food-regularity and hearth-order rose the huge complex social organism. Little by little man, who

was mere hunter, fighter, sex-tyrant, was caught up in the cogs of this order-machine. He found it good, this thing she had made. Her Woman-energy, star-shaped, equilateral, geometrized, had created in fen or cave a hearth-order which she developed into an elementary kind of social structure; finding it good man made a throne of it and sat on it.

This, broadly stated, is as near as we can get to the exact facts of that far-off day. The history of the race is a dark story of Woman's struggle—by revolt, or by craft and indirection—to establish her equality with man. She did not often win; she did not always lose. In spite of the fact that man held her in double bondage—held her by sex-tyranny and economic dependence—she did not always lose.

II

THE WOMAN AND THE SWORD

THERE will not be much chance for us, in this book, to fare down windy roads, under the stars, seeking the wild gods of adventure.

When you have to do with Woman you find yourself shut up between walls and windows. You experience the endless and hideous sensation of curtains flapping in your face. And here, for a little while, we can take the open road. And there is a certain exultation in feeling that—as we ride—side by side with us and knee to knee, the wild, free Women ride, with laughter and fierce cries, in a tempest of life and death.

For that thing happened once upon a time.

By some wild grace of the gods they got out of the coop, in which through the ages they had lain sex-bound and food-bound.

You do not believe it?

All history (and the history of all races) echoes with rumors and legends of their frantic escapade. And never, mark this, was there one legend of humanity—was there one myth of mankind—which is not true in symbol and in essence and in fact. Indeed the only history which is indefectibly certain is that which comes down to us by way of myth and legend and symbol. That alone is true. The documents of the chancelleries are false as a dicer's oaths. The books of the historians are guesswork and rhodomontade. Froude smiled with complacent skepticism at Raleigh's story of the Amazons; and though no mariner ever sailed to Raleigh's island his legend is truer than Froude's twelve-volume "History." And so, when you ride with the Amazons, you are riding in a world amazingly real—a wonderful world where never flapped the wing of a Strasbourg goose, where Woman was a human being and not a fatted and deformed thing of sex.

"I say, you are not going to take the story of the Amazons seriously!"

I shall take it very seriously, for it is a significant historic fact, recorded in every language, preserved in the popular wisdom of

every race. Deep in the subconscious mind of Woman the old memory lives; and again and again, through the ages, it has stirred her to emulation of those tall, fierce women who rode, conquering with sword and spear. (The downiest, softest little Strasbourg goose, lying among the sofa cushions, munching sweetmeats, remembers it drowsily, now and then, and is lifted —if only for a moment—into Womanhood, by this stark race-memory of a rebellious past; then she munches another sweet and forgets it and thinks of a man.)

Again and again it has stirred her to emulation—women of Argos slaughtering the Spartan braves, Gaulish women beating down the Roman swords, pike-women of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine and *dames de la Halle* marching on Versailles, lank swordswomen of Ranjeet Singh—emulation has wakened in her again and again.

The story of the Amazons is in the memory of every race, Hindu, Chinese, Aztec, Slav, Teuton—so abiding was the impression it made; it is written in all the books; it is written with serene glory, in Greek art. You see a beardless Greek youth leaning forward on his rearing

horse to seize an Amazon and she, smiling, drives her short sword into his heart. Along the terra-cotta frieze the she-warriors gallop; they wear the short tunic or *chiton;* or they are clad in armor with helmets and moon-shaped shields; or dressed in tight-fitting Persian trousers, with Phrygian caps on their heads, they ride, exultant, among the naked Greeks. You may still see, at Athens, fragments of a violent adventure, the memory of which was caught up by an artist and made immortal in marble. What a fight that must have been!

One Woman, gashed in the throat, is slipping from her fleeing horse; another, beaten down to her knees, still holds high, in the agony of death, her splendid head, while the Woman who shall avenge her comes riding—a white, stark Woman, astride a plunging horse, her leg-grip on its heaving flanks, she hurls her deadly spear.

What are the facts behind the Amazonian legend?

One may take them, with some confidence, from the Greek writers, for what distinguished the Greek was his freedom from silly simplicity and credulity. The time is three thousand years

before our era; the place is to the northeast of the Caucasian range of mountains; the people are the Scythians. A rebellion overthrew the reigning house and two chieftains—princes, if you will—with their families and partisans and followers were driven out of the land. It was a Scythian horde of men and women. It sought a home in the foothills of the Caucasus, slaughtering and enslaving the native population. What happened was natural enough: the natives, in savage conspiracy, murdered the male invaders —it was a carnival-night of vengeance—but let the Scythian women live, hoping to make useful slaves of them. But these women in exile, migration and invasion had reacquired animal hardihood. They were women as the lioness is lion. They organized for defense—choosing two queens, one for home affairs and one for war. They conquered the rebellious natives. They established their state and that there might be peace therein, they slew, exiled or mutilated the few Scythian men who had not perished in the massacre. It was a man-less state, organized on a war-footing. And it began to conquer the world that lay at hand.

One problem confronted these women-war-

riors. Time and the sword were thinning their ranks. Recruits to be sure came thronging in from the man-world; but a sounder basis of population was needed. So the younger women took mates from the captives or from the neighboring states. Of these unions children were born. The male-children were either sacrificed to the gods, mutilated and kept as serfs, or sent back to their fathers in the nearby tribes. The girls were carefully nurtured—fed on mare's milk and the flesh of wild animals, and early bred to the use of weapons and war-horses. Their war-dress was a scant tunic that did not reach the knee. As you see them, immortalized in marble, they were great white, muscular, half-naked women, with grave, deadly faces. They fought on foot with bow and arrow; and, as horsewomen, charged with leveled spears and whirling battle-axes. It was that they might loose the long arrows that the right breast was either cut off or atrophied by binding it in youth; whence came the name the Greeks gave them—the a-mazon, or breastless.

So the woman nation grew strong and numerous; and great queens led it out on raids of conquest. You may still trace in the old historians

and geographers the route of their homicidal wayfaring. They conquered the kingdoms of the Caucasus, swarmed down the hills and overran Cappadocia, pushed on to the Black Sea, where they established a fortress and city, pushed on to the Ægean Sea, "swept over Asia Minor into Syria, founding many towns such as Ephesus and Smyrna." They fought the Trojans in Phrygia. They carried their conquest into Egypt, into Parthia and on into India, where they set up a colony.

(Said Arjuna: "If we conquer these women-warriors, we shall obtain no credit thereby; but if we are conquered our disgrace will be greater than can be conceived. Moreover these women are of great strength and whoever lives with them for a month is a dead man.")

One of their flying armies came down upon the Greek settlements and attacked impregnable Athens.

So rode and raided and rieved the wild she-warriors of long-ago. And the story of their red adventure is written in the legend and literature of every ancient race, so widespread was the fame of their prowess, their cruelty and the relentless efficiency of their governing in

peace and war. It is certain that in recorded time many tragic attempts were made to imitate their fearful triumph. You find them in Africa, in the Americas and in Europe again and again. The history of woman-rule in Bohemia, under Valasca, is extant for your reading. It tells the eternal Amazonian story—first victory, then successful state-building, then love-treason, confusion, defeat.

Is it a legend? Is it a forecast—the prophetic soul of the world (*anima mundi*) dreaming of things to come? Is it an old race memory of matriarchal days? Or is it an allegory of that tribal life in which the men wandered far afield hunting food, while the women guarded the roof and the fire? And did the Women, thus banded together for defense, create so perfect a war-instrument they put it to the test of raid and conquest? And did their unisex army, dehumanized and monstrously swift, ride through the blood and fire of an antique world? This last supposition seems the truest. *Facilé credo.* For the valor of Woman is a mystic and manifold thing. And her star-like faculty of order—her energy for organization—might well find outlet in the only work that lay ready to her

hand: War. You have not forgotten it was Woman who invented—or revealed—modern ways of war-making. Three modes of warring she revealed and Napoleon and Joffre had but to perfect them:

I. The methodic organization of cavalry;
II. Open order in infantry attack;
III. The grouping of artillery.

The Woman who did this thing was Jeanne d'Arc and she holds, to-day, the record of generalship—three victories in three successive days.

You will say that, granted the truth of all this, it does not lead us far; that there is no lesson for the complex present in the fabulous adventures of a primitive world.

And I will say the lesson stands up like a monolith.

Once, and in what legendary world you please, Woman was a human being; in that lawless hour she was fierce, monstrous, one-breasted; she was anything you please to call her—except a Strasbourg goose. And this picture of Woman, even if it be no more than a violent symbol, is vital with significance. It

proclaims that deep-embedded in race-memory is the record of Woman's primal equality with man and her inalienable right to a stark body and a self-governing mind. The historical traces of Amazonism, of matriarchy, of "the Sauromatians ruled over by women" cannot be dismissed as mere dream-fables, desire-myths of unhappy womanhood. They point to an animal equality—a human equality—which obtained in an early world and which is being reaffirmed by the new and imaginative science of our own day.

It is hard for you to believe?

Dear man, the thing you see tottering along the street on short legs and high heels—its head gaudy with taffeta rags and feathers—is not a Woman; it is a female. Neither God nor the devil ever made a thing to look like that. Man made her. And she is just as much a monster as the male-soprano he used to carve out of human flesh. You cannot judge Woman by what you see walking about in skirts—ashamed of the duality of its legs. She is the product and result of generations of coop-life and coop-law and coop-feeding. Once, I repeat, she was wild and free and winged; and

it was that you might see her on the wing I called up her vanished *gloria alata.* Not without suffering was she deprived of weapons and pride and nudity and thrust into the coop and prison of her sex.

Not without suffering——

In his cold, serene way Herbert Spencer describes her experience:

"In the history of humanity as written, the saddest part concerns the treatment of women; and had we before us its unwritten history we should find this part sadder still. I say the saddest part because, though there have been many things more conspicuously dreadful—cannibalism, the torturing of prisoners, the sacrificing of victims to ghosts and gods—these have been occasional; whereas the brutal treatment of women has been universal and constant—almost beyond imagination."

Brave words, bravely spoken; each man knows their truth; but it would be childishly uncritical to fall into the error (as many high-tempered women have fallen) that this cruelty was due to man's mere malignancy, selfishness, willful tyranny. That were to rank man among the demons. What lies under the tragedy of

Woman is something more incessant, more insistent—a force of nature, vitiated, deformed and misdirected. In its essence her tragedy is a tragedy of the coop and it is nothing else.

THE FOUR TYPES OF DEGRADATION

In the twilight of time you saw these women-warriors, lank and tense and hard, riding to the conquest of India——

(By the way: Have you noticed that every puissant Woman—the Woman in whom the vital force is strong—has a strange love of twilight? It is then she wills to be alone; it is then she dares confront herself, terribly, in the silence; and though I speak without sure knowledge I think that what rises within her, there, is a ghostly army of fierce-eyed Amazons, whispering to her memories, hopes, impulses, promises of battle; and she remembers what she was—long of limb and big of bone and hard of muscle—ere the coop-men had their way with her; and so in the twilight she dreams and, dreaming, recaptures a little of her winged glory.)

With spear and sword and victory she rode,

the Woman, into the land of Arjuna and what India made of her you may see if you glance through the window-bars of any zenana. The whole history of Woman is in this contrast between the white, stark Amazon of the Greek frieze and the fat and downy thing cackling in a Hindu coop. You have seen what Camilla was —she of the golden bow. Hindu civilization bred her down into four varieties, and that they might have names, it named them the Padmini, or lotus woman, the Chitrini, or art woman, the Shankini, or conch woman, and the Hastini, or elephant woman. And in Hindu land the types persisted and affirmed themselves, even as, in Europe, persistent poodles and pugs have been bred out of plain dog.

She in whom the following signs and symptoms appear is called a Padmini:

"Her face is round as the full moon; her body is well-padded with flesh soft as the Shiras, or mustard flower; her skin is fine, *tender to the touch,* and fair-hued as the yellow lotus—never dark; her eyes are bright and large, with reddish corners. Her bosom is full and high; her throat is so delicate that when she eats the food can be seen passing down it. She walks with a

swan-like gait; her voice is low and musical; she delights in rich garments and jewels. She sleeps respectfully and is ever anxious to worship the gods and please her master."

Such is the Padmini woman—and such a thing may woman be, O, wild Penthesileia! who faced the furious Achilles and fought him, battle-ax to sword, even to the death.

Will you glance at the Chitrini woman?

They bred her thin above and fat below.

"The Chitrini woman is of middle size, neither too short nor too tall, with lamp-black hair and a thin neck; her waist is lean-girthed like the lion's; below the girdle she cannot be too heavily made. Her skin is soft with the perfume of honey. *Her eyes roll and her neck is coquettish like the swing of an elephant,* whilst her voice is that of the peacock. She is fond of pleasure and variety; she delights in singing. Her desires are not strong and she loves parrots and other birds. Such is the Chitrini or art woman."

And after this will you see the Shankini woman, she whose "skin is always hot and tawny"? Her head, hands and feet are thin and long. Her mouth is always moist; and she looks out

of the corners of her eyes. She delights in red-colored flowers and garments and ornaments. She has wild fits of passion in which she laughs and screams adorably. Such is the conch woman. As the other types were bred for obesity, for waddling plenitudes, the Shankini was bred for a lean kind of fragility and an irascible temper—so that when one teased her she would snap like a Pomeranian dog. And indeed you will find, if you consult the poets, that men have always wanted in their females either plenitudes or fragilities, and either whimpering slavishness or a yapping, lap-dog kind of insurgency which amuses with its pretense of biting.

The fourth type—you might as well have it, for you meet it often enough in life—is the Hastini woman. She was kept short and squat, with a tendency to coarseness. Thus she was slow of gait and sulky. Her hair grew thick and tawny; her skin was "dead-white" and she had a large-lipped mouth.

Into things like this and into these things the wild free Woman you have seen abroad in the world, riding to battle or ruling matriarchal septs, had been degraded by a theory of life that made her wholly female.

Did she acquiesce in this process of femalizing?

I think there came a time in most countries when she acquiesced as completely and venomously as she seems to have done in India. And you hear her saying:

"So you want me to be a female, do you—all female! Well, by the gods feminalian, I'll be one!"

And she was.

If you look back you will see that all history is gashed and bloodied and poisoned with her fierce and subtle sex-adventures. She has taken many a vengeance royal. I should say, rather, that she has taken many a female vengeance, for men had left her merely the weapons of her sex. Rarely could she get her hands upon a sword, but there was poison as well as perfume in her mouth and the vengeance she took was wicked, Cleopatran, female——

It was a bad, perverse way of attack because it was unisexual, limited, ego-ized, outside the comely, polarized forms of the life-force. Almost all the literature made by man is taken up with lyric complaints, or dramatized recitals of this subtle warfare the female has waged on his

comfort or his life. If he is not bleating his passion, like the senile Goethe, he is snarling his misogyny, like Euripides. When he does not bleat or snarl he sneers—which is a cold and evil thing, a celibate thing.

(Celibate cerebration is not nice; witness Leopardi, Schopenhauer, George Moore; and Bernard Shaw, who is also a celibate of a sort.)

And, thus, you find man's literature largely a moan or an ecstasy or an objurgation over some female, who has snared him in the net of sex and bound him with her hair and drugged him with her breath.

It is pitiable and absurd.

But is it not logical?

Man created this over-sexed thing and it turned and gave him to drink—holding high the jeweled cup of sex-poison. And the man drank; and his vision of life became a nightmare in which moon-faced Padmini and Chitrini with "lamp-black hair" and "heavily-made below the girdle," gibbered at him and mimed.

(*Son rêve est femme et flamme d'orage et poison,*

Il offre ses seins blancs comme les lys perfides. . . .
Mais la Nuit et la Mort hantent ses yeux arides.)

She was the product of her way of life; she was what man had made her and she was what she had made herself. She was a sex-specialized creature, like the monstrous female spider, *mantes carolina,* that feeds upon the male. She was the Lamia, with woman's face and dragon feet, who devoured those who came to her call. She was precisely what a life of sex-specialization had made her—a being of mystery and selfishness, treacherous and perverse, source of dreary carnal pleasures and moral tortures, evocatrix of jealousies, turpitudes, crimes; and under her impure suavity lurked the fires of hate, violence, rancor.

("And woman, yea, woman was terrible in story.") She was terrible because she was abject. But even in those hot and hareemed hours of her degradation she was not without protest. You can hear, down through the ages, her low voice, soft and infamous, whispering: "Hate and wait." And I think there was a splendid and defiant flash of honor in that dark woman,

Catherine de Medici, who took up this tragic wail of her sex-bound sisters and flaunted it like an oriflamme in the face of men: "*Odiate è aspettate.*"

Woman waited; that was patience; but even as she waited in the hushed, scent-stifled zenana of life, she never quite lost her wild impulses of insurgency. Her suavest coquetry concealed a profound antagonism. She was always an insurgent.

Even in her basest enslavement the star shone within her—for the soul of Woman is a radiant soul.

Radiant always—as when sex first flashed like a star in the flickering chaos of a world that dreamed of order. And you have seen this Woman, primitive, capable, striving to establish order in a savage world by "mother-rule," by pathetic experiments in matriarchy; you have seen her, when she asked deliverance of the sword and rode, slaying and pillaging, in an Amazonian world; you have seen her pulled down and tied up and tamed in the prison of sex—taught to chirp and feed from her owner's hand; and always, under her life, there crept and sparkled a fire of insurgency.

Two ways of warfare she had:

One was, by sex-weapons to conquer the individual male—and almost all literature, history and art record this epic duel; her second method, which is foreshadowed in matriarchal septs and Amazonian raids, has been developed chiefly in latter days and it is the method, whereby women unite, in more or less definite organization, to claim their half-share of humanity. That first method of taking vengeance on the individual man furnishes all the dark and tragic stories of humanity—its infamies haunt the ages. The *ewig-weibliche* took a tolerably complete—and peculiarly cruel—revenge, when it came to the individual man. In this love-brawling, Woman got her own back again; and I think (personally) a bit more than her own. Be that as it may. When women united as women—as human beings—their cause took on new aspects of heroism and clean-minded honor.

III

GATES OF THE BODY

EVERY one who has been well brought up admires Greek genius. Our latest philosophic thought and even our newest looking scientific thought are part of our inheritance from Greece. It is true, also, that from this "pagan world" (of which so much rubbish is written) we have inherited a little of the tyrannic contempt for Woman which lurks even in the well brought up man. The women of Greece were not the free pagans of story. Exiled from civic life, barred out from intellectual culture, they were hearth-slaves, whose unbroken business it was to give birth to children, bake bread and look after the linen. The Athenian women fared only a little better than their sisters of the Orient. They were shut in behind walls. If for them life was less difficult, less brutal, less unjust it was because the sane Greek could never descend to the gross and incoherent

cruelty of the man of Asia—that obese yellow male, jeweled and abject.

The Athenian women were condemned to seclusion.

Without, on the edges of life, there were to be sure bands of lawless girls—Myrto and Plango and Aspasia and Phano and many another of whom the old orators and the old poets had so much to say. But the *hetairae* were merely sex-puppets, dolls of Eros, curled and painted and corseted and perfumed like the light, sad, profligate women of our own day. They were free, if indeed there is any desirable freedom in being permitted to wheedle a livelihood out of vice-ridden old philosophers and evil boys. With the exception of the two light classes of women—the *hetairae* and the *pallakas,* or entertainers—Athenian womanhood, in the great days of Greece, was a thing enslaved. And the plaint of the Woman has come down to us in words as tragic as any words of human speech—words heavy and sick with pain——

"Of all things upon earth that breathe and grow

A herb most bruised is woman. We must pay
Our store of gold, hoarded for that one day
To buy us some man's love, and lo, they bring
A master of our flesh. There comes the sting
Of the whole shame, and then the jeopardy
For good or ill, what shall that master be?
Reject she cannot, and if she but stays
His suit, 'tis shame on all that woman's days.
So thrown amid new laws, new places, why,
'Tis magic she must have to prophesy.
Home never taught her that—how best to guide
Towards peace this thing that sleepeth at her side,
And she, who laboring long, shall find some way
Whereby her lord may bear with her, nor fray
His yoke too fiercely, blessed is the breath
That woman draws! Else let her pray for death.
Her lord, if he be wearied of her face
Within doors, gets him forth; some merrier place
Will ease his heart; but she waits on, her whole
Vision enchained on a single soul.

And then, forsooth, 'tis they that face the call
Of war, while we sit sheltered, hid from all
Peril. False mocking. Sooner would I stand
Three times to face their battles, shield in hand,
Than bear our child."

If the old Homeric traditions of liberty lingered among the Æolian and Dorian women—as indeed they did—there was really only one exception to this life, as of "a bruised reed," which for ages the women of Greece endured; and this was Sparta.

There is no need of taking an emotional view of Sparta, though I can well understand why the mere word rings—with the clangor of metal and revolt—in the heart and brain of Woman. Sparta did not solve the woman problem, but it may be said—without humbug—that she solved it in so far as her own local and peculiar civilization was concerned. The Spartan state, ringed round with enemies, had to be ever ready to fight for its life. From what far gods—or stars—wisdom fell upon it I know not; but in some way it learned the great truth that humanity is double—that it cannot fight successfully if

frank boys and girls, naked as flowers, sexless as stars, ran and wrestled together, romped and hurled the far-darting javelin—under a sky of blue purity.

There for a moment in time humanity reached the sane sex-equilibrium of the animal world.

There wasn't any silly sentimentality. There wasn't any senile bleating about being "hauled on" by a female mystery. There wasn't any of the nastiness of sly and secretive youth. The Spartan didn't write sonnets to a woman's eyebrows; he wasn't a fool. Woman was his companion; she was his mate; she was neither an ecstasy to be raved over nor a mystery to be shuddered away from—she was, in a sane world, a sane part of a sane commonwealth.

And this, I think, is the lesson Spartan history, or legend, holds. I want to make it clear and hard as glass.

Thus: Woman cannot do her duty to the race unless she fulfills her duty to herself. The welfare of the race and the individual are as indissoluble as a word and its meaning; they are a bi-unity.

Now the Spartan woman was developed, in

body and mind, precisely as the Spartan man was developed. Her muscle met and held his muscle. Her culture met and answered his culture. Her freedom in the state was identically his freedom. Of man and woman the state asked the same thing: Race-preservation. And there its meddling stopped. For bear in mind (though Plato pretended to be shocked by it) that the Spartan law restricted women only in their functions as mothers. It ordered them to guard vigilantly the gates of life. That was all; for the rest Woman was free of her body as she was free of her mind. Her race-duty was made plain: Sons and daughters for Sparta; but that duty, it was held, lay between her and the life-force and not between her and any arrogant senate of law-makers whatsoever.

Perhaps they were mad—those Spartans. They looked upon the life-force as a clean and splendid thing—as though it were some wild divinity seeking a home in the flesh. Humbly they acknowledged that the life-force is the mightiest and most peremptory of all forces. They looked upon it as something enormous, potential—a dark tower full of men and swords.

And they never thought of taking the life-force and tying it up in red-tape.

They saw nothing terrible in the birth of a child, even though that child came, impudently, into the world without a state-license clutched in his little fist. I know that Sparta did not solve the problem for our complex, elaborate and sex-excited civilization, but it emphasized the biological truth that race-progress is conditioned in sex-freedom, that upon Woman's individual development depends the development of the race. That is the lesson Sparta has to give; and for an example she shows a balanced civic life—as equitably balanced, perhaps, as any in history—for human men and human women.

Sparta walked on two legs; she flew with two wings.

THE CRAFTY MATRONS OF OLD ROME

You and I are going for a little while with Woman on her way in the world. We shall not see anything nobler than the vision we have had of the Spartan woman, standing in proud, victorious nudity at the gate of the city and

the gate of life. She who was the guardian; and if she be no more to you than a symbol carved in marble you have gained something. In the Roman world, too, there is one thing to be got. It also waits for you in marble.

There is a sarcophagus in the British museum. It is that of Scianti Thanunia, who died two centuries before Christ. She tried to cheat oblivion. So yonder she lies, depicted for all time, a soft obese woman, with fleshy arms and huge earrings dinting the fat of her jowls, with ruddled face and curled hair, smirking into a polished mirror. A woman of Rome; she was not the Roman woman; but she was what Rome made of her women in the years.

If you are trying to picture Roman civilization to yourself you might think of it as something hard—based on an instinct to compel and forbid; and you will notice that Roman propensities were largely animal propensities, directed by vigorous and unscrupulous intellect. In such a world Woman, one would fancy, did not have an easy time of it. Yet she won two immensely important victories—the one by craft and the other by insurgency. Both these victories are worth studying. They are the things

every woman should know. The meaning has not gone out of them; the seeds within them are not dead.

The victory the Roman woman won by craft is of present-day significance. In order to make it clear I shall have to ask you to glance for a moment at the marriage laws of that ancient world. As far back as we can trace it Woman was a chattel—in youth she was owned by the father and when she married by the husband. The commonest kind of marriage was plain purchase. It was *coemptio*. By the contract of coemption the woman was bought outright from the father or tutor and passed into the power of the husband. And this power was complete —the power, over her and her children, of life and death. ("Slaves and women were not reckoned as being properly members of the community.") The woman was his thing; he could feed it or starve it, kiss it or kill it. Among the patricians this coemptional marriage was decorated and fortified by a religious ceremony, but that merely added a mystic link to the chain that held the woman in slavery.

It was a bad state of affairs. At its worst

Woman—with the craftiness which is always bred of servitude—found a way out.

There was a Roman law that anything a man had possessed and used for a year became his own property. If, for example, a horse strayed upon his land it could not after a year be reclaimed. If no one claimed the sword he found by the well it became his inalienable property. There was only one condition. Horse or sword, it must not pass out of his possession during that period. The usufruct must be unbroken. Now Woman, like horse or sword, was a thing of property. *Mulier non habet personam;* she was not a person, but a thing. Indeed it was not until the Christian era was nearly six hundred years old that the Church, after grave discussion, decided and proclaimed: *Mulieres esse homines*—that is to say that women were part of the human race. Up to that time the Aristotelian theory that woman was an animal, inhuman and imperfect, prevailed.

Woman usually contrives to make the best of a bad situation. In this law of *usus*—of usage—she saw her chance. She, too, were she in a man's keeping for a year, passed into his perpetual ownership; but suppose the usufruct

were interrupted? In that case she did not become his property. And so the *usus* system of marriage arose. Freely the woman gave herself to the man in an experimental kind of union. All she had to do to escape becoming her husband's property and a slave over whom he had right of life and death, was to pass three nights of the year out of his house. Thus she broke the law of usufruct. Thus, though a wife and mother, she maintained her status as a free woman.

This kind of marriage became immensely popular; even the men found a certain benefit in it; and it spread throughout the Roman world.

I looked up this law of *usus* in the Pandects, or Digest of Roman Law, in the edition I had at hand, which was that of Jean d'Arérac. He points out that this usufructual marriage system followed the Roman legions into Gaul and Britain. In Champagne it persisted until the ninth century, when the ecclesiastical authorities put an end to it. As late as the eighteenth century traces of it were found in Wales and the Hebrides and it has not yet died out of the Basque provinces.

This form of marriage was distinctly Woman's victory. It gave her liberty of a kind. It gave her, also, a sort of grip on her dowry or private fortune. Moreover it was the seed from which grew up the admirable Roman law of divorce. Under the *usus* system the woman was as free as the man. If he demanded fidelity of her he had to show a clean slate himself. If she were guilty of adultery he could divorce her.

It was a simple matter.

All he had to do was to say to her before witnesses: "*i foràs*—out you go!" On the other hand she had the same right. If Henricus was unfaithful, she too could cry: "*i foràs*—'op it, 'Arry!" and Harry had to hop it.

This simple and swift divorce method made for good behavior.

There were checks on loose action. For instance, when the husband, divorced and cast out, was guilty of infidelity or cruelty or any other breach of the contract of usage, which alone tied him to his wife, he lost the entire dowry. A guilty woman lost only a sixth of her dowry. During the marriage—that is during the duration of the contract *in usu*—she had complete control of her dowry and personal property.

Moreover if her husband ill-treated her, or insulted her, during the life of the contract, she could sue him and have him cast in damages. So the use-marriage developed into a good-mannered, good-tempered companionship, in which Woman found herself an equal partner in a legally-made association. Man and woman were partners to a pact—precisely as two men are partners in a business or a trade. In a word, what had happened was this:

The Roman matron had enfranchised herself. How free she was you may see from the records of those days, with their story of women's clubs and women's senates, of women ruling the home and taking part in public affairs. Women managed their own property; they became a dangerously rich part of the state.

And then something happened.

THE RED-HEADED MAN IN ROME

Two things the Roman women had gained through this tolerable marriage-system: perfect equality and freedom of divorce and a large measure of economic freedom. They managed their own property and the property of the

minor children was in their hands. These things they did well. There is even evidence that they showed gross ravenousness for money and piled up—often by usury—great fortunes. After the Punic wars when wealth flowed in from the Orient there were in Rome as many rich women as there were men. It was then they struck at one of the old oppressive laws the men of an earlier day had laid upon them. This statute bore the name of Oppius, a mob-leader, a demagogue. It decreed that no woman should possess more than half an ounce of gold, should wear a parti-colored garment or should ride in a chariot in Rome or other towns, save on religious errands. Against this silly law the women rose in revolt. They induced two tribunes to propose its abrogation and the matter became one of immense public interest. In the streets and baths and barber shops and libraries and clubs nothing else was talked of for weeks. The women threw themselves into the campaign. They held private caucuses. They organized public meetings. They went into the streets and public places and waylaid every man who had a vote. They harried the senators.

They heckled the prætors and consuls. In fact they set Rome ablaze.

The evening before the vote was to be taken a great popular meeting was held. One of the consuls made a savage speech against the matrons. He was Cato, a red-haired man, obstinate, brutal and (like most men of his type) a victim of sex-terror. He carried the mob with him. As the mob went so the tribunes would go. In fact the women learned that two tribunes—just enough to prevent the abrogation of the sumptuary law—were against them.

There was no sleep that night for the matrons of Rome. They paraded the streets. They surrounded the houses of the two tribunes who had declared for the Oppian law. At dawn the pale tribunes yielded. And when later in the day the public assembly convened not one vote (save that of the obstinate, red-haired sex-maniac, Cato) was cast in favor of the inane old law. One historian, Zonaras, states that when they heard the news, the women broke into the assembly and donned their gold ornaments and parti-colored garments and then, laughing and shouting, marched out and took the streets of Rome. And all that day their chariots thun-

dered to and fro and shook the walls of the city.

You may read in Livy, if you will, a vivid and precise account of this famous outbreak of the matrons; and there, too (like a fragment of the perishing stuck on a wall), you may see the wild, bad words of the sex-terrified Cato and his pathetic exclamation:

"Had there been no women in the world the gods would still have been dwelling with us!"

So, pale and vociferous, the red-headed one emerges from the shadow of a vanished world—and gets his moment of immortality.

You see, do you not, the road along which my thought is journeying?

There, for a little while, in the mid-Roman world Woman had both liberty and power. The historians will tell you she held public office—high offices in muncipality and state; they were magistrates; they ruled over Roman settlements in Spain and Asia Minor; they presided at the public games; they erected public baths and gymnasia—giving freely out of their wealth to public causes and needs, like any ambitious politician or philanthropist of our day. They had wealth, power, liberty. They used them precisely as men used them—and not otherwise.

And the point I would make is this:

Their liberty and their power and their wealth they owed to the simplest thing on earth and that simple thing was a system of marriage which gave equal rights to the woman and the man. Nothing else. For a short space of time, in those matronalian days of Rome, Woman stood at man's side, his equal. Marriage was a compact between equal partners. For due cause either partner could break it—"*i foràs!* outside, please." It was based moreover upon a just economic recognition of equal rights and responsibilities in the family wealth. It was not a perfect system. No system could be perfect which was founded—as the *usus* system was—upon a twist and evasion of the law, due merely to the craft and bold ingenuity of women. (*Qui dissimulat non liber est.*) It was imperfect; but imperfect as it was it splendidly exemplified what a sane, equable marriage relation may be and what such a relationship will do for humankind. What was good in it was its measure of freedom. It failed only where its liberty was checked.

For a little while—

One thing, tragic and enormous, is repeated

again and again in the world's history; it is the attempt of Woman *to get out.* Once did she break furiously through the web of life and ride, screaming and bloodstained, on Amazonian raids? Once, in Sparta, did she stand, nude and splendid, holding up in the sunlight a child born to pride and not to shame? Once, in Rome, did she grasp a little of her share of the world?

These things happened and for a little while these things were. Woman rose, a human being, and took the air and the sun! Then the red-haired Catos rallied, hooting, and drove her back to her zenana and her coop. They drove her back and tied her up; and always what they tied her with was a sex-law.

(When that didn't keep her quiet they beat her over the head with a creed.)

IV

SIGN-POSTS OF THE PAST

TWO symbols; and they are heavy with significance.

Had not the Huns passed that way (for the second time in history) you had found the first symbol at Reims. Even now the memory thereof may serve. Above the unfinished portals of the cathedral, and high up on the façades, were the heads, the busts, the bodies of men emerging from the walls—monstrous as gargoyles. A few of these figures were the flowers of sane, young life—women, adolescents, strangely resembling the ancient marbles of Athens. But most of them were men in the force and ripeness of age; they were men who laughed, wept, grimaced, opened mad and haggard eyes, as though the Demon were showing them, in frightful temptation, all the kingdoms of the earth. (I remember one group—hung there between heaven and earth—fierce-eyed and superb, as the sardonic old men Donatello sculptured in

the high places of the Campanile of Florence.) It was a world of stone; and it was a man's world.

The second symbol you will still find—for the Huns were halted a few leagues away—at the door of another cathedral; it smiles upon you from the face of the gilded Virgin of Amiens. She wears the crown of a princess and in her arms she holds, lightly, a laughing, royal child.

Let us see if we can get at the meaning of these symbols, for in them is the saddest—and most mysterious—part of Woman's story.

The Roman freedom, whereof you have read, was dead. Two bad things killed it—excess and the Hun.

Coincidently over the world had risen a new promise and a new hope. It was the hope that universal love would correct the defects of nature; it was the promise that absolute justice should give reparation for human errors. And it was a strange world. I would have you think of it as part of Woman's heritage. For, in awful truth, she is heir to the Middle Ages—that world which was an immense cathedral, which was a house of prayer, vast as the Occident, wherein all men kneeled. The very blas-

phemers and men of blood were on their knees. The poor folk of the field prayed as they harrowed the soil. Knights and their men of arms, galloping far off on the horizon in the light of a red dawn, prayed as they rode forth to pillage and slay. The whole world prayed in the dark sanctuaries where the Vicars of Christ uplifted their mystic hands. And this picture is true, if you will remember, also that the Middle Ages, enormous and obscure, were filled with furious activity. Men were builders: castles and towers, palaces and churches sprang up like miracles in stone and beauty. Men were fighters: the weapons were red in their hands. They were explorers, traders, scholars, investigators, heroes, martyrs. It was a man's world, virile as those effigies of male effrontery that stared out, once upon a time, from the Cathedral at Reims.

And what was Woman's place therein?

First of all men picked her pocket; then they locked her up; then they made an idol of her—and having made of her an idol, they smeared it with paint and decorated it with beads and flowers and feathers and prayed to it and beat it.

They picked her pocket by stripping her of the economic freedom the Roman law had given her; notably they defrauded her of her share of the patrimony by giving it all to the sons. By way of locking her up they gave her the choice between the key of a man's bedroom and the key of a cell in a nunnery. When they were not kneeling to her they knocked her about the ears.

Of course it was not quite so simple a matter as this. In some way or other we shall have to gain a sympathetic understanding of the man of that day, unless we are to think of him as a deplorable compound of religious lunacy and sexmania. He was neither a lunatic nor a maniac; he was merely that mystic animal, man —even as you and I. His difficulty was precisely your difficulty and mine. He didn't know what to make of Woman. The moment he thought of her he was up against the riddle of life. He could see that she was not merely an animal. Like man she had emerged from the sane, hunger-driven, sex-directed world of the animals. And he saw there was something mysterious in her—something like a star.

But what was it?

I might as well reveal to you, here, that the mystery of Woman is in reality only the mystery of her godhead—the mystery of the "divine spark," which she shares with man. But this has always been too simple an explanation. It does not attract the muddled mind of man. Always he has had some vague idea that her mystery was in her sex. He has put this belief into all his creeds; and in his muddled occult way has adored—or hated her.

He has clothed her with the sun and set the moon under her feet and crowned her with twelve stars.

He has built a temple to her and engraved upon it:

"She is everything that was, that is, that is to be; and her veil no mortal has ever raised"; then he has thrown himself down and beat his head upon the steps of the temple—in horror and adoration of her sex-mystery.

She has been for him Istar, the Virgin, and Chimalma and Ceredwyn and Attis and the eternal Maya. And always she laid worship and terror upon men. Even the sane Greeks, the hard Romans, were haunted by her mystery. In Rome they set apart the vestals—*virgines*

sanctæ—as symbols of the mystery. There were not many of them; four at first, then six and finally seven; but the difficulty of persuading sensible women to play the silly part became so great the number was reduced to three —and even then it was only by lavish promises and privileges vestals could be procured.

I think the reason was plain.

Women, who are constitutionally opposed to this kind of silliness, had too much influence in the Roman world to let vestalism get a foothold. And to their men, always perversely haunted with ideas of sex-mystery, they said: "O, well, you may have a few *virgines sanctæ* to stare at—but three are enough."

And they were.

Came the Middle Ages and the three became thousands and tens of thousands. Looking back you see life as an androcentric wheel, revolving slowly, with wild, despairing little virgins thrown off from its outer edges like sparks.

The truth of it is that man, in those centuries, feared woman as he had never feared her in all the past. What he feared was not the godhead in her—at which the most indomitable man might tremble—but the eternal mystery of her

sex. And since every man both hates and worships what he fears he locked her up—or made of her a gilded slave of virginity.

He was afraid she would, in some crafty way, get between him and his soul's safety. Hark to him, thundering through the mouth of Tertullian:

"Do you know, O women, that each of you is an Eve? God's sentence upon this sex of yours is still in force and the guilt, of necessity, also persists; you are the devil's gateway!"

(May I interrupt the thunder of Tertullian, for a second, while I recall the words of the exultant American prophet, Walt Whitman? You remember: "Be not ashamed, women, you are the gates of the body, you are the gates of the soul.")

Tertullian continues: "You are the devil's gateway! You are the robber of the forbidden tree. You are the first rebel to the divine law. You are she who persuaded MAN to evil—whom the Devil himself was not valiant enough to attack. So lightly did you destroy God's image, MAN."

Thus Woman incarnated the sin of the world.

Her mystery was not godhead—like yours and mine—it was something demoniac, lustful, tempting to damnation. And all man's purpose in that sex-haunted world was to conquer the syren's song—*vincere syrenum cantum*—to overcome the wild impulses of pleasure-yielding love. He thought of Woman (a canny Scot has said it) as a fire-ship continually striving to get alongside the male man-o'-war and blow him into pieces.

You are the gate-way of the devil; with this thunder roaring in her ears poor little Theresa of Avila entered the House of Keys, which was the convent of the Incarnation of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel; she was eighteen years old, and as she came to the door of the prison-house "nature cried aloud in her" and so fierce a repugnance woke in her that "it seemed as though her bones melted and her heart was torn, with physical anguish," out of her little body.

Go hide your mystery, which is your guilt, little girl of Avila! Cover it with stone walls and penitence! Bruise and starve and deform your little white body so that the tempted and terrified mammal, MAN, may find—in your cru-

cified virginity—salvation for his prurient soul! Prostrate yourself, O virgin Tarsilla, on the stone flags of your cell and moan the nights away! When death releases you and "according to usage" they take up your poor ruined body to wash it for the tomb they will find your "elbows and knees covered with callosities like those of a camel"—authentic testimony to your piety, said Gregory, saint and pope.

"Renounce marriage and imitate the angels," said Saint John of Damascus; renounce, renounce—it was a wasted and mystic world; and through it moaned and wailed the little queens and saints—nailed up for man's salvation.

SIGN-POSTS BY THE WAY

And you, O modern woman, salutary and strong, facing the future with a splendid "I want" and a lordlier "I will," are the heir of those dark generations. In your bone, in your blood, in your mystic brain you are the heir of those sex-poisoned and creed-warped centuries.

Mark you, in this book you are going somewhither. I am not asking you to follow me while I run round and round in a circle—like

some merry lap dog. As straight as I can—direct and one-purposed—I am going to a definite goal; but that we may not go astray I want you to pause and scan, with me, the sign-posts on the road.

You have seen them, as we passed?

Somewhere a star shone; and then there were vague signs of a matriarchal world, in which Woman had every liberty for fulfilling her duty to race—and that liberty alone. Signs there were of an Amazonian world, in which Woman, hostile and insurgent, claimed entire liberty for fulfilling her human duty to herself—bidding race-duty go hang! Signs there were of a fair equilibrium between the two duties which lie upon her—race and self—in the tall, Spartan days of yore. And then there were signs, in the mid-Roman world, of equality in home and state.

These things you saw: Life becoming freer for women precisely in proportion to the degree in which it got better for humanity. And then you saw rolling up, in mist and blood, the days that laid low the kindly Roman rule. (It was kind to Woman.) Rome fell to her harsh, Teutonic conquerors and Woman was crushed and

outraged under the burden of Teuton law—degraded to her ancient servitude and complete economic dependence upon man. And then, that her downfall might be complete, there rose a mystical horror of her sex—which sent her to pray, with knees of a camel, in a stone cell. And this horror of the female—this hate of Woman—has persisted in the ages; it echoes through all literature; and Nietzsche, Ibsen, Strindberg, Shaw are merely latter-day instances of a silliness—half mystic and half sexual—of which the old Tolstoi was, perhaps, the dreariest example, unless it were Byron, who refused "to eat or pray" with a woman. One and all they are the sterile and perverted sons of the first Fathers of the Church—the barren sons of Tertullian, obsessed (there is no other word for it) with sex. They linger on, in evolution, like some species nature has forgotten, carelessly, to exterminate.

So you have the sign-posts on the road.

I would not have you see the Middle Ages only in the crude colors and rough outlines I have given them here. Other things there were—tendencies of immense significance; and you, O salutary Woman of to-day—defiantly aware

of your human birthright—have them for your inheritance. (A fair and perilous part of your inheritance.)

THE WOMAN WITH THE LUTE

It was in France that Roman culture lingered longest. The fair land of Provence, girdled by blue waters and purified by the sun, bred unvirginal women and stalwart men. And there longest was held at bay the harsh Teutonic barbarism that trampled over the rest of the Roman world. Refinement of manners lingered on; fair treatment for women was not wholly abolished. Out of that life, and what it represented in Italy and England, where hints and memories of Roman freedom were still to be found, I shall take two pictures—fragments of life.

Lute-woman and loom-woman.

Two destinies; two professions; to-day, as then, they confront the Woman at the door of life. One man said: "Get thee to a nunnery, with thine infamy of sex!" and she went—the bones melting in her. Came another man, who had read Plato, and he said: "True beauty is

also the good." And since Woman, in her human way, slim-bodied, standing erect on her white heels, was beautiful, he found her good. Indeed he found her too good to waste in camel-kneed virgils for his dubitable soul. So he stood at her casement window and sang to her fervent, adorable songs that flutter yet, like birds, in the world's memory. He brought from the Orient silks and pearls and perfumes to make more desirable her little, femalized body.

From the Orient—

Pause here and get a clear and exact knowledge of what it was that man's frantic crusading—with gonfalon and two-handed sword—gained in the Orient. Not the Graal; not fragments of the True Cross; the Crusaders brought back from the Orient four things:

Ogival architecture, cherries, leprosy—and the Lady.

It was because they had silks to wrap her little body in, pearls to hang on it that they made, out of the shaggy whelp of Womanhood, the lap-dog thing you and I know as the Lady. (You shall meet her again in another chapter; here I wish only to show one side, mystic and curious, of the strange, little figure.)

The minstrelsy of Provence, heralding the Renascence and the Latin revival of civilization, begot a transfiguration of Woman. The Church had shuddered away from Woman's perilous flesh—and erected gilded statues of her. The lovers of Provence united these two wildly dissentient opinions. They beautified and decorated her feminine flesh and, withal, they proclaimed and adored her moral supremacy. They created a new service of love and entered therein with knightly humility. And this doctrine of celestial love and its courtly observance spread from Provence through all the Latin world. It was a *vita nuova;* to "love spiritually became a necessary qualification for all who aspired to intellectual completeness." Love became a mystic thing.

(Precisely here you find the root of all the maudlin verse and moon-struck fiction men and women devise ceaselessly to feed the sex-fever with; and it is a sad thought that the silliest part of it comes from the pens and pencils of women.)

Love became a mystic thing; love "desired earthly beauty" that through earthly beauty it

might be led to "the Eternal Beauty, which is God."

Madonna è disiata in sommo cielo.

It was Dante's vagary; so desirable was his lady on earth he fancied even heaven was amorous of her!

Now all this moon-struck adoration of Woman served only to tie her up the more securely in the bonds of her sex. These were not the chains Theresa jangled in her cell. They were cords and ribbons of silk. But, do you not see, the effect was precisely the same. It was the zenana over again. It was making Woman a desirable sex-object—a prettier sex-toy—a daintier Doll of Eros. It set her on a throne, but her throne-room was a "court of love." It taught her Latin, not to broaden her brain, but (Bembo said it) because Latin added a quaint zest to "a young lady's charm." It was a grotesque throne they set her on—builded of sex-passion and spiritual fervor; and there she sat, smeared with lust and worship, the Lady!

For the moment let us leave the lady there, with her Latin and her lute—ballad-mongering lovers sprawling at her knees.

There was in that singing-world another Woman—

Always there is another Woman; that is the eternal and inscrutable tragedy; and in the Middle Ages you find not only the germ of parasitic ladyism but, as well, the germ of the modern industrial exploitation of woman.

THE WOMAN WITH THE LOOM

"In the year 1793"—this is merely an illustration—"there was at Meudon a tannery for human hides. Those of the women were almost good for nothing, the tissue being too tender."

Age of the lady; age of Saint Bernard—that giant among saints; age of Louis VII and of Philip-Augustus; in this age there was written a rhymed report of the industrial exploitation (not unknown to-day) which consisted in making gold out of the flesh and the blood of Woman. Fragments of this "report on industrial conditions" I shall translate for you out of the old French poem of Chrestien de Troyes.

A knight came riding; he was Yvain—the Knight of the Lion, for alongside his horse galloped a yellow lion. And he rode toward the

Castle of the Worst Adventure. The people of the town tried to halt him; he rode on. The porter checked him at the gate; he forced his way in and entered. There was a vast yard fenced round with sharp pikes. There he saw three hundred women, working at silk and gold-stuff. Ceaselessly they worked with busy hands. Lean women; their necks were shrunk and their faces haggard; their gowns were dirty and ragged—gaping at elbow and breast; they bent their heads and wept, but ceaselessly they worked at the silk and the gold-stuff. They did not raise their eyes. And Yvain hailed the porter of the castle and said to him:

"By the soul of thy father, tell me who are these maids I see yonder, working at silk and cloth of gold! The work of their hands seems beautiful, but they are not beautiful, being gaunt and pale and dolorous. Yet I believe they, too, would be beautiful if they had in life something that made joy for them."

"Do I know?" said the porter, "and if I know, why should I tell you?"

Then Yvain went to the palisade of pikes and forced a way into the yard; and he advanced to the maids and saluted them one and all—and

he saw the tears running down their cheeks. And Yvain spoke to them and one of them made answer:

"We are slaves and captives of the Sons of the Devil. We cannot be delivered save by a good knight who shall slay them in battle. But why should we cheat ourselves with such a hope?

"Never we do what pleases us to do. I talk like a child when I speak of deliverance. Never shall we be set free. Always we shall weave and sew the stuffs of silk and gold and never shall we be better clad. Always we shall be poor and always we shall be hungry and athirst. No matter what we gain we shall be no better fed. We scarce have bread for morning and night. Out of our earnings each of us keeps but four farthings and that is not enough for food and clothing. There is not one among us whose work does not bring in more than a shilling a week. The duke takes all save the four farthings. He grows rich by it. We are in great poverty and he, by our work, is rich. That he may grow richer we work the day-long and part of the night. If we wish to rest from the

work a little while he threatens us with hunger and the whip. So dare we take no repose."

Eight centuries passed; Tolstoi visited a silk factory; and he saw, not three hundred women, but three thousand, working twelve hours a day at the silk-stuff; they were haggard and their necks were shrunk and they did not lift their eyes.

That a man might be Dives!

What things were done to Woman; aye, what things were done to Woman. She was soused and imparadised in sex—worshiped as a sex-god—slain sacrificially on the altar of virginity—degraded into a warped and painted doll of Eros—tied like a dog to the loom—

V

TWO HISTORIC DEFENDERS

IN those medieval days there were two notorious contemporaries: Columbus, who sailed Westward and discovered America—that there might be a home for unhampered womanhood; and Erasmus, who remained in old Europe and discovered, for himself and for the learned of his day, the amazing fact that Woman was a Human Being, entitled to all the rights of humanity.

Which was the greater achievement I know not. Which demanded the greater courage I know not.

Upon one thing the creed-makers and code-mongers were agreed: Woman was the enemy. Calvin, grizzled and terrible, was to look upon her with hostility colder than that of the Church, shutting her off in hareemed corners as unfit even to pray with man. Luther, burly, beer-drinking, uxorious, said: "I burn with un-

quenchable fires of lust" and found his coarse pleasures in three things: Wine-pot, Woman and roaring balladry. In woman he saw merely a cup to drink carnal pleasure from. And this was sadder and deadlier than Calvin's celibate bitterness and disdain. (They were both fat men.)

A mad and dirty world.

There was one sane man in it, Erasmus, and he was, I think, the first man who lifted voice or hand or sword or pen in the cause of Woman, his fellow-wayfarer down the road of common life.

Once I was in California.

I entered the public library in Hollywood. I saw the long lean lines of books and the tall, scholarly women who are the warders of the books. And then I saw, in place of honor, a portrait. It was not, as happens so often in American libraries, a portrait of that quaint, bearded gnome of finance, Carnegie; what looked out of the portrait at me was the lean and righteous head of Erasmus.

And to one of the tall warders of the books I said:

"That is the only dead man's portrait a

woman should salute thrice a day, with reverence. His name was Yvain and wherever he went there galloped or trotted at his side a yellow lion."

"I thought his name was Erasmus," she said.

"It is the same thing," said I; in a world where women lived in the Castle of the Worst Adventure that man Erasmus was a mighty breaker of gates and palisades.

He was the first woman suffragist.

Round him the kings were fighting, murdering, looting; round him scholastics and dialecticians snarled and wrangled—"Thomas against Scotus"—while to the North Luther roared for a wine-pot, a woman and a song, or fought with a visible Devil, throwing ink-pots at the fiend; round him the man-made states were falling down into social and economic chaos; round him were labor wars and food riots and popular turbulence; and the grave, serene man, looking up from his books in Venice, said:

"There is one remedy for all this sort of thing. *Men must get over their rabies for calumniating women.* Then, if order is to be brought out of disorder, they must consult

women, both on private and on public affairs, and take the advice of their clear-sighted and candid minds."

From the madness of fighting, creed-wrangling men he appealed to the candid sanity of women, who see things as they are. To-day only a fool thinks of questioning his wife's importance, but back in the year fifteen hundred the discovery of Erasmus—that woman's brain is the better ordering brain of the two—was as startling as the achievement of Columbus, who discovered a new continent.

Erasmus insisted it was of first importance, if women were to have weight in the conduct of affairs, that they should "get together." He pointed out that bishops have their synods, monks their *conciliabula,* even thieves have their conventicles and the very ants hold congresses, "while women alone do not put their wits together." So he argues for women's clubs, associations, guilds. And as in those days one had to quote precedent (Erasmus complains how hard it was to steer clear of pedantry) he went back to Rome and the reign of Heliogabalus, calling him one of the greatest of the Cæsars, saying:

"The historians blackened his name and reputation solely because this great Emperor freed the Vestal Virgins and trampled out their blasphemous fires." Another thing that brought down upon Heliogabalus the wrath of the scribes was that he instituted a senate of women —a real *senatus,* with powers in public affairs, over which his mother, the Augusta, presided. The Roman wags jeered at it, calling it the senatulum—a toy thing. It came too soon into a society too near its fall. It failed, but not until it does succeed will the world be sanely, because equably, governed.

"O, women can never agree!" some one retorted—the words have a familiar ring to-day.

The reply of Erasmus was not without anger.

"Well, can men agree?" he asked; and once more he pointed out the monarchs warring with each other, the theologians burning each other, quarreling—Luther roaring loudest of all—so many men, so many opinions—and asked, bluntly, if women might not bring a little sanity, constancy and agreement into this turbulent discord. Said he:

"Woman's influence is needed in the state,

because it would be *against war and against wastefulness.*"

Wise words; those are wise words.

He was in favor of a mixed senate—or, as one would say to-day, a mixed parliament or congress. There was room in it for nobles and plebs, for mothers, wives, widows, maids—in plain words for women—since Erasmus, being sane, refused to rank them according to their sex-relations. Above all, it is an imperative thing that mothers should have the right of suffrage—*mater habeat jus suffragii;* but every woman should be entitled to both the ballot and to representation; and men and women should take the public offices turn about. One solution he thought of was that there should be two parliaments—one of men and one of women—having equal voice and authority in determining public affairs.

These plans and projects of Erasmus were attacked by a sophistical abbé.

"You'd let all women vote, eh?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What of light women? *Quid de concubinis?*" asked the abbé, grinning.

"This is not a simple problem," said the

shrewd, kind man, "but I will say this: If there are many of them, if they form a part of the population, they have unquestionably the right to a voice in determining public affairs. Their suffrage is to be consulted. Their voices and needs are to be heard. They are women and their rights are essential parts of their womanhood." (Once when Erasmus saw one of these poor, light women flaunting her bad business in a London street, he said—and I leave to the words the pathos of the language he used in that day—"*Non humanum est hoc spectaculum.*")

And so the brave, wise man fought for woman's rights—for all of them; and when the cynical abbé advised women to keep to the kitchen and the buttery and worship the goddess Deverra (who was the bustling goddess of housecleaning) Erasmus made his famous argument for learning—free as man's—for maids and matrons.

"Tut," said the abbé, "a learned woman is twice a fool."

"A fool said it," retorted Erasmus, for the good man was testy at times, "the woman who is truly learned does not appear learned; on

the contrary it is the unlearned woman, knowing nothing, who tries to appear wise—and so looks twice the fool"; and with this he told the abbé of the learned women of Italy and France and England by the sea.

It is because his portrait looked at me in a library, on the far edge of the Pacific, that I have put Erasmus in this book—this hero, long dead and half forgotten in a day that rather disdains the language he worked in so nobly; perhaps some scholarly woman, remembering what he strove to do for her sisters of the long ago, will bring him out into the world again.

What did he want you to do, Woman?

This: he wanted you to assume your responsibility for the right conduct of the world.

And he said that *nothing* (he repeated it—nothing) *can resist the incessant and consistent will of Woman, when she knows what is true and wills what is good.* Therein lies your responsibility to yourself, O Woman, to your hearth-mate and your sons and to your outcast sister—thrown to jackal and vulture. What is your insistent will? For the thing you are willing is the thing that shall be. Your aspiration is a promise made to the future.

A PROPHETIC HEROINE

Brush and star; beside the portrait of Erasmus in the library there should hang a portrait of the tragic French girl, who fought as valiantly as he for the rights of women—more valiantly it may be, for she died a bloody death for them. Her name should be written here, for if you are looking for the source and origin of the modern woman-movement you must seek it —not in Condorcet or Mary Wollstonecraft— but in that prophetic heroine Olympe de Gouges. In the tumult of the French revolution she stood up—outfacing Marat and Robespierre —and demanded "all rights for all women" and paid with her life. She must have been very young when she wrote the novel, in which she taught that Woman is man's equal in every respect, if she is granted civil, political and educational equality. It was in September, 1791, that she issued her incomparable "declaration of the Rights of Woman." And these rights, "inalienable, natural and sacred," she developed in seventeen articles, of which I shall quote three:

"Article first: Woman is born free and re-

mains man's equal in all rights of human being and of citizen.

"Article six: The law should be the expression of the general will and all citizens, men and women, being equal in the eyes of the law, should concur, personally or by their elected representatives, in its formation. It should be the same for all. All citizens (men and women) should be equally eligible for all public places, dignities and employments, according to their capacities and without other distinctions than those of honesty and talent.

"Article ten: The woman has the right to mount the scaffold; she should have equally the right to mount the tribune"—in other words her voice should be heard. It was this famous "article ten" that Madame de Condorcet quoted, in a later day, to Napoleon.

"I don't like women mixing in politics," said the emperor.

"Perhaps you are right," said the widow of the philosopher, "but in a country where one cuts their heads off, it is only natural they should want to know the reason why."

As a matter of fact the only equality the revolution gave women was that of the guillotine. It

was a man-made reform; and the best it had to say for Olympe was that she was a "heroic fool" and its ultimate answer to her "declaration" was to send her to the guillotine.

It was in article eleven that she outlined her famous "social contract between man and woman." In a way it was based on the old Roman system of *usus*-marriage. Husband and wife formed a partnership, which could be terminated by either party to it. The chief point of the contract was that all property was held in common, *for the benefit of the children,* and it could be divided only in their favor. When you bear in mind that Olympe de Gouges was an illegitimate child—she was in reality the daughter of the Lord of Pompignan and not of Peter Gouges, the butcher of Montauban—you will more readily understand one of the significant liberties she defined in this article eleven. Part of the contract the husband and wife signed read as follows:

"Mutually recognizing that our property belongs directly to our children, *of whichever parent they are born,* and that all our children, without distinction, have a right to bear the name of the father or mother who acknowl-

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edges them"—which opened a wide door. There was a sharp outcry that her *contract* was immoral. Her justification is that in order to make marriage as moral as possible she was trying to make it as free as possible. According to her ideal (and it was a very high one) the union in which there was no longer any love should be broken. And then her thought went to the children. The noble and touching explanation of article eleven is that it proclaims the *right of all children to protection*—in the family, in the state; and if she did not find the ultimate solution she opened a way to it. And the voice of this brave writing-woman comes down the years to us. She lived in that age when Jean Jacques Rousseau, with impudent selfishness, could proclaim: "Women exist to please *us,* to be useful to *us,* to console *us,* to render Our lives easy and agreeable"—and could drop his new-born children, like dirty linen, in a basket at the door of a foundling's home. In a day when the thought of this foul sentimentalist pervaded the world she lived. She lived in a day when men slaughtered each other for the rights they wanted most; and when Woman had only one acknowledged right

—to be guillotined like a man. And over the maudlin sentimentality and the bloody tumult I hear her clear, brave voice, speaking memorable words:

"Justice cannot be divided. It is for humanity entire—*for that humanity which is a living unity, beneath all its apparent sexual duality and its seeming variety of races and diversity of fast-fleeting individuals.*"

When this truth is proclaimed, in fair France and many another land, the half-forgotten name of Olympe de Gouges will be written high—higher, perhaps, than that of old, wise Erasmus, who first unfurled the flag of civic rights for women.

She was heroine and prophet; across the years you may see her standing in the tumbril that carried her to the guillotine in the old Place des Vosges; she was "tall, with dark, wide-open eyes and a very sad smile." So she and her message died; it is, of course, possible that both she and her message—in the eternal mysteries that enwrap us—may live again; but I do not know.

VI

THE ATAVISTIC WOMEN

I HAVE asked you to look back into the past in order that you might see the seeds of the present.

It would be cruel and improper to write of Woman as she is to-day unless one made clear the causes and circumstances that have made her what she is—the age-old causes and the palliating circumstances. What I have shown you of her past has been, to be sure, fragmentary but not haphazard. You have seen only a few of her symbolic adventures, here and there in the ages, where the historic darkness is least obscure; but what you have seen defines her.

"Woman is a bad lot," says the cynic.

He has been saying it since the beginning.

Men of a low sort have always delighted in a clumsy kind of satire against women. You can pretty well judge the point a nation has reached

in social evolution by noting what its men say about women. When you find its idea of humor is the jeer and the jest at woman you may be pretty sure it stands low in the scale of evolution. That is a simple truth. And when you come to the individual the same law holds good. It is a low sort of man who delights in making fun of women. And here I am not thinking of the dirty jokes of dirty men; I have in mind the caddish jokes of the little-minded men, whose cheap wit soils the newspapers and sullies the drawing-room even in our own day. This sneering contempt for women disfigures all literature, from the Proverbs of Solomon down to the latest jack-daw comedy of Bernard Shaw. The only saving comment one can make is that the best men are the most free from it.

"Woman is a bad lot," says the cynic.

Woman is not a bad lot, but she is a mixed lot. And the point I would make here is that her vices, as her virtues, go back into time. She is the child of all those ancestors I have called up, momentarily, from the past. Their lives, dolorous and broken, savage and insurgent, tawdry and heroic, have left their marks upon her. She is the child of all her past—

with its crimes and mysteries and martyrdoms, its vehement passions and its tears.

She is precisely what it made her.

Still the Amazon rides faintly in her. Still the old matriarchal tyranny wakes in her—and if she doesn't beat her husband she compromises with her instinct by smacking little Willie. She lolls on a rug by the fire because drowsy memories of the zenana have pulled her down. She lies and cheats and wheedles the male because that was once her only defense against tyranny. She is silly—because men, liking pretentious silliness, once made a lady of her. She is fat—because she still has the physical heredity of coop-life. She is criminal—not because she delights in crime, as man in his romantic way delights in it. As a matter of fact Woman hates crime as she hates everything else which is disorderly and morally untidy. When she rebels against the law and becomes a criminal it is usually because the law is laid upon her in a crooked way.

Now all these old instincts toward being a bad lot come down to her from a past for which she was not responsible and which Woman had small part in making. It is from an old man-

made society she inherits her instincts for brawling and for deceit, for silliness and for fat. In a certain class of women these instincts are largely dominant. They have done nothing to wear them down. In fact in the sort of society in which their lot is cast they could hardly get on without qualities which have been bred into the female as timidity is bred into a spaniel. Silliness and fat and lies are the natural weapons of the parasitic woman, whether she be the lady of the *salon* or her tawdry sister of the night-lamps. The child of all her ancestors—and that is a terrible thing to be; within the white, narrow house of her body the ancestral criminal whispers to the ancestral saint; and there is warfare within her; for to woman, no more than to man, does goodness come by nature—it has to be worked for and fought for desperately.

And so, I say, a tremendous lot of women are still under the dominance of the old heredities that shaped and deformed womanhood into femalism.

Do you mind looking at a few of them?

Something may come of it.

WOMAN'S POTENT INDIVIDUALITY

Woman is multiple.

She is a web and not a unified substance.

And the fault of every book about women (especially this book) is the tacit assumption that Woman can be crowned with a capital letter and looked upon as a whole—that one can generalize about women.

Now you may know a great deal about women, even as I know a great deal about women, but the moment we begin to generalize about them all our knowledge is refunded into ignorance.

Here is a significant truth:

Women differ far more widely than men do. They break away further from type. Man's work has tended to knock the individual angles off him. It has kept him closer to a sort of general pattern. Men rub against each other in their day-work and get a sort of common roundness, like pebbles in a brook. Women, on the other hand, have been forced to lead lives away from human activities. They have been kept out of the activities of the state and, largely, out of those of constructed society. Thus, left to

themselves so far as the great matters are concerned, they have developed a larger measure of individuality than men have.

It is a strange thing but it is true.

Underneath the tyrannies and hypocrisies and smudgy caresses man has laid upon her, woman has managed to preserve a furtive, but potent kind of autonomy. Even in the zenana, muffled in fat and drugged with perfume, she succeeded now and then in being herself. In fact there is really more individuality to a woman than there is to a man—nine times out of ten.

You do not believe it?

My dear man, it is merely because the women have been too clever to let you see it. It is part of the palavering they keep up to make you keep your hands off them. In every woman, underneath the pretense of running to form, are strenuous individual affirmations. In a tragic underhand way she has (while doing her duty to the race) done some of her duty to herself. Usually, when men are about, she keeps that individuality to herself, for strong though it be it is sensitive; and too long the old philosophers and flabby poets and little-minded wags have

sneered and jeered at her. But there it is—in the silliest woman as in the fattest woman—an individuality, peculiar, affirmed, star-pointed. That is why intellectual men, prophets and world-changers, who are occupied with the great facts of human evolution, always have so many women friends. They are studying the star. In Woman's aspiring individuality they see, faintly outlined, the coming humanity.

Man has been longer in the open.

You and I (being intellectual) know more about him. To-day our proper study is woman, *because she is emerging.*

Do you remember the ancient goddess who sat, clashing her cymbals, before the cavern of primeval night?

She was Adrastia; and, as she clashed her cymbals, chaos turned drowsily into order; and life emerged.

That is woman's true rôle to-day; she is beating the cymbals.

THE INDECENCY OF SKIRTS

And now, if I may say something neither pleasant nor agreeable, I should like to tell the

woman of this day that her immediate and implacable duty is to kill as many as she can of the bad atavistic types of womanhood which are poisoning modern life. She should kill the Padmini woman and the Chitrini woman. She should kill the criminal woman—though criminal women are not as bad as they pretend to be and nothing on legs is so silly as the silly woman makes out to be. Above all she should kill the modest woman.

That woman gets on my nerves.

Shall I tell you why?

It is because she is not a woman at all; veiled and petticoated in her sham and nasty modesty she is a mere thing of the zenana—a self-conscious sex-deformity—a Strasbourg goose, alarmed, and sensitive on the subject of liver.

Let us get this thing straight and clear.

The chief drag on the woman-movement today is that nasty little zenana female, who is so horribly aware of her sex, that she is ashamed —I have said it—of the duality of her legs. She is the last rock and refuge of all man's old sex-tyranny. And that bad business will not be ended until the last modest woman has leaped

astride a polo pony and galloped, laughing, into the field.

There is only one flagrant immodesty and that is petticoated mystery.

Fat is a bad thing; perfume is an evil thing; but of all things bad and evil, mystery is the worst.

The whole story of civilization might be told in terms of the garments women have hidden themselves in. Man had her once hooded, cloaked and covered from head to heel—as though she were something either sacred or obscene. Her enfranchisement began from the top down. First she got her head free. She got out of the pallium into the veil. Then in the thirteenth century, gloriously, she put on a bonnet and showed her face to the Western world, leaving her veil to women professionally religious. Some day I should like to write a history of the bonnet. All womanhood would be in it—both in the book and the bonnet. The origins of the bonnet, I believe, are difficult and obscure; it had its good days and its bad days; it towered into the monstrous *hennin;* it sank into the smug *escoffion;* but there came a time when women chucked it after the veil—leaving

it to the professionally religious women and their quaking and shaking sisters. It was at the Renascence when men began to admit Woman's equality that she threw away the bonnet and affronted masculinity in a toque. And then in the fighting days of the Fronde—when she played with sword and musket—she clapped a plumed hat on her, precisely as the men of the day did. When she brawled heroically—died heroically, like my brave Olympe de Gouges—in the French revolution, she was wearing just such a liberty-cap as her brawling, heroic mates.

Woman's progress is written in her dress.

If she began her reform at the head she did not mean it to stop there. Men, mark you, used to wear petticoated robes; now they have left them (as women left their veils) to the professionally religious—to a few anachronistic judges and to the sweet-boy graduates and the dear old professors. Men have chucked the skirt.

But you wouldn't have women do anything so immodest?

Wouldn't I? My dear man, I've been doing nothing but tell you there is absolutely nothing

on earth so immodest as a skirt. It is a badge of the zenana—a sly, whispering sex-indecency.

Come, man, it is all nonsense.

Isn't woman a human being after all?

She was meant to be.

Given a human being's chance—the chance a man has—she will be just as splendid an animal. She will be as swift and strong a creature as the woman of ancient Gaul—she who was *braccata*—breeched and formidable.

Will be?

Man, she is.

Once I went out to California; and there I met wild, cold, companionable women—breeched and gaitered girls—who will saddle up a dancing *broncho,* toss themselves athwart his spine, and gallop with you twenty miles before luncheon—talking politics, the while. They are the future. They are sane and salutary companions. They are not obsessed with little parasitic sex-intentions—like the petticoated female. They are women. They are human beings, even as you and I. They are sane as trees. They do not yowl about sex. They are women of the polo-field and the motor-cycle and the aëroplane

and the diving-board—frank and salutary as the trees tossing in the wind.

Companions; and, mark this, my dark-minded brother in iniquity, they have rid themselves of the Don Juans (a nasty tribe!) by the simple device of stepping out of their skirts.

O, the wisdom—the primeval, the cosmic wisdom of the London bus man of my youth. They were the days of the two-story busses and daring women rode, now and then, on the roof, from which they got down by a narrow, winding stair. And one day a woman stood at the top of the stair, fiddling with her skirts, retreating and advancing; and the man of the bus glanced up and said wearily: "O, come on, lidy, legs is no treat to me."

This may seem to you too frivolous an anecdote for so grave a book; but it is not frivolous; it is an epic phrase in which is summed up all the sex-wisdom of the ages. Decorously and reverently I repeat: Legs should not be a treat to any of us. That Gaulish woman *braccata* walked the world, pantalooned and comely, unconcerned as a man. It was only when she was huddled into mysterious wrappings and sex-en-

ticing disguises that Don Juan pricked up his long ears and went braying after her.

Those rather pathetic women who fought the "battle of bloomers" in the long ago were right; Dr. Mary Walker was right; Madame Dieulafoy, who walked in Paris, trousered and at ease, was right; Woman cannot take her place in human society, side by side with man in splendid comradeship, until she gets out of her skirts.

That must be her first victory.

And she must chuck them—as she chucked the *pallium*—not because they are flimsy or foolish or cumbersome or too long or too short or too thick or too thin, but solely because they are sex-badges. They are sex-marks; they are labels on the Strasbourg goose. They are indecent advertisements, announcing: *Female within.* They shroud the Woman—she who is a human being—in the travesty of a sex-specialist.

As emphatically as I can say anything I want to say this:

WOMAN'S FIRST REBELLION MUST BE AGAINST THE INDECENCY OF WEARING SPECIALIZED SEX-GARMENTS IN PUBLIC.

Until she has gained the social right to dress like a human being she will gain few other rights. Indeed it is only where she is specialized into a sex-thing—is dressed and curled and furbelowed so as to add lure and mystery to her sex—that she has lost, wholly, her rights as a human being. Long ago man found the way to make a slave of a woman was to veil her and fatten her.

At the root of her inferiority is her dress—the sham-modest garments she hides herself in that her sex may advertise itself the more shamelessly. Her first giant-step toward comradely equality will have been taken when she throws away her sex-badges and dresses her body (which is a perfectly decent thing) as though it belonged to a human being. She has taken the ring out of her nose; let her take the rings out of her ears. She has taken the veils off her head; let her take them off her legs. So long as she dresses to lure a male she will be kept to that bad business. There can be no place for her in the economic world—and it is in the economic world that she must find her freedom.

Therefore, strong sister, in your killing, kill

that "modest Victorian female" who lingers at the top of the stair, pushing down her skirts. She, as much as the kiss-merchant abroad in the evil night, is your enemy and the enemy of your liberation. Man cannot kill her; he will not kill her; he likes the floppy, sirupy thing; but you, who are the Woman Emergent, can strip her of her rags and feathers and veils and make her stand up, flat-footed, two-legged, erect and free, a human being, having other business in life than that of stimulating the sex-curiosity of the male. And until you have knocked this much sense and decency into her your battle for higher things hangs dubious.

LADYISM AND "ACCOMPLISHMENTS"

I have said that men cannot help much in this matter of destroying the bad types of womanhood which have come down the ages. Men cannot do much, for the shaping of life, especially in its early years, is almost entirely in the hands of women. It may be that generations shall pass by before women succeed in suppressing those forms of dress which are devised solely for sex-distinction and sex-attraction,

and face the world proudly in the garments of a human being—garments made for comfort and beauty. The problem is radically one for the mothers. Something will be gained when they dress their young daughters and sons precisely alike—giving them equal opportunities for the muscle-building sports and games. Even if a girl is to have no more than thirteen years of freedom from sex-dress—even if at that age she is to be thrust into the coop—she will have gained much. She will have acquired human ways of using her body. She will have learned to depend upon her physical strength. She will have gained a proud sense of the human birthright she shares with the brothers who leaped and ran and wrestled with her—met her in romping equality on the playground and in the gymnasium. And one horrible and tragic thing will be done away with: that is, the awakening of the sex-idea among children who should be as unaware of it as animals. For this awakening is due entirely to one bad thing and that bad thing is the custom of dressing up little girls in sex-emphasizing, sex-alluring garments and sending them out, fluffed and ribboned and curled, like tragic little dolls of Eros,

bent on the bad business of captivating a male.

I cannot understand how a mother can do this thing.

I should think the heart within her would leap with horror at the mere thought of sending forth a young human creature—in the playday of life—decorated with the professional badges and gaudy trade-marks of sex-business. It is horrible; and if it is not blasphemous that is only because blasphemy against womanhood is not in the code.

It is more the task of woman than of man to reform this matter, but it seems to me the sane father might have something to say when he sees his little daughter—almost from birth—willfully deformed by education and dress into what it seems best to call a doll of Eros.

There are many other atavistic types, results of a dark past, which assist in holding women back in their bondage. Already we who are men and women—and not mere sex-animals—have begun to question their utility. The questioning spirit, as Balzac used to say, is the rebellious spirit. Sooner or later, without sudden transition, in the slow way of evolution,

these artificial types of womanhood will be expelled from life.

The most hopeless type, it may be, is the contented woman, she who lingers on hugging the old traditions of parasitism, glad to feed out of a man's hand, grateful for caresses, proud of the characteristic deformities of body and mind she has inherited from generations of coop-life. Other awakened women feel the humiliation of sex-bondage and economic slavery. The contented women love them, as some old, old prisoner might love the rusty music of his chains. Now and then they thrust their heads out of the windows of the zenana, with shrill asseverations of their perfect felicity. They have a bird in India called, by reason of its ceaseless, irritating cry, the "brain-fever bird" —and with perfect propriety you may apply the phrase to the cage-women.

There is even a quaint slang name for them; they are called the Antis. And it seems they are anti-suffragists and anti everything else that makes for the liberation and justification of womanhood. (With this I thought, shudderingly, that they might also be *anti* this book; whereupon I reflected that the enmity of fools

is more precious than the friendship of the angels.)

Mark you, I do not blame the woman with a slave-soul; she is the melancholy product of atavistic years. The slave-soul was drilled into her just as it is drilled into a Prussian soldier. Man wanted that sort of thing to play with. She is a far-off child of the obese Orient. Kin to her and very much like her, though of finer tissue, is that more artificially specialized female, the lady. She is largely a creation of those fighting, praying, singing, building mediæval times whereof you have read. She was refined down out of plain frank womanhood. Hard laws of manner and deportment were laid upon her. She was taught the pretty hypocrisy that she was legless as a mermaid or the Queen of Spain. She was charming. She was brilliant and polished as the ring on a man's finger —graceful as the feather in his cap. AND SHE WAS A FEATHER IN HIS CAP. And nothing else.

That she might be more "desirable"—as Bembo said evilly—ribbons and bangles of scholarship were tied to her. They were her "accomplishments." The Renascence did that. From love of learning? Possibly.

The Renascence was interested in learned ladies precisely as it was in talking parrots—legless dwarfs in the lady and speech from the parrot were equally amusing.

Talking parrots were wildly applauded; legless dwarfs were wildly applauded; learned ladies were wildly applauded.

(Wildly they applauded themselves; poor little Laura da Creto of Brescia cried shrilly and her voice has come down to us: "I am ready to tear out the tongue and rip up the heart of any one who denies women can excel in letters." No one denied it. How could any one deny it?)

Poetesses and courtesans shone like stars of learning—Dorotea Bucca and the scholarly Felicia Rasponi and Ippolita Sforza, who spouted Latin to Pope Pius himself, and Isotta Nogarala and many another brave woman who clutched at the vast high things of life and was pulled down and stifled with kisses; and died.

Not for a moment do I deny (as wild little Laura feared) that women can excel in letters. Even in that bad day they so excelled. Even in our day, in spite of handicaps that would daunt a man, they excel. Where they most

notably excel, you will observe, is in science, in philosophy and in exact scholarship, for the soul of woman—some one said it—is star-shaped, accurately geometrized; and thus it is in matters requiring perfect definition and precision that she takes the lead. Man with his sputtering soul—divergent as a brush, scattering as a spray—has a magnificent aptitude for inexactness. He is at his best when you give him vague things to toss about. And so he is a master-player with the hollow balls of romance. He can toss them higher than a woman can. Romance and adventure, songs and visions and verses are what he can fashion best. His sputtering soul delights in them.

There have been women poets, too?

Here I found myself up against a difficulty. I laid my pen down and for a long time—it seemed an hour—I paced the floor in mental anguish. Finally I determined to write the words you are about to read:

Since the thirteenth century at all events there have been no women poets.

Oh, oh! And Mrs. Browning and Madame Desbordes-Valmore and a hundred others whose poems sing in the heart of humanity?

What I would get at is this: They were not women—who were poets as they might have been astronomers; they were ladies, with all the heredity of ladyship, who wrote poems. They were lady-poets, which is a darkly different thing from being poets. Their tendency was, like Hannah More, to write "very genteel poems." Even that wild-hearted woman of genius Ada Negri, who was peasant-born, by some strange and hideous alchemy became a lady the moment she began to write.

The lady is an artificial product of a man-made civilization; she is decorated and set aside to be the most entertaining of all parasites; her very scholarship and learning have been given only to make her "more desirable" sexually; she has been set up on a pedestal of specialized manners and modes—only that her sex-attractiveness might the better display itself. In her way she is no more a normal woman than is her predatory sister of the twilight. She is a lady. She is not a woman, perfected, made fine, growing in wisdom and beauty, making endless additions to her natural self, expanding her innate powers. She is a sport and a freak in nature, developed upon the line of sex, dependent upon

her sex-pull, dainty and parasitic—and proudest of her huge, ravenous, parasitic appetite, which can swallow all the privileges a silly social organization stuffs into her.

The word lady has got itself so shockingly mis-used that this sort of definition is necessary here. It has been applied to good women and bad women. It should be reserved exclusively for that artificial female who is trained, fed, taught to please the finer and more poetical sex-instincts of those men who, having wealth and leisure, can afford to be nice in their tastes.

The ideal of womanhood is a well-bred woman. A perfected woman.

Certainly it is not a lady.

Now my argument swings to the point that women have not written poetry—having left it to the ladies. And the streams of mellifluous verse they have poured out in the centuries are so stained with ladylike sex-worship that even a strong stomach turns. When a woman did arise, strong-winged for poetry, tradition threw her back into the old rippling current of lady-verse. I know that a part of woman's liberation is evident in the new flight of singing-women, in England and America, whose poetry

is not sex-ridden, but is in a way both human and cosmic. It has begun, even in this day; whence Laurence Hope wails for her lost zenana and kills herself in terror of the new freedom; the new song is rising, even in this day, when you may hear strangely Oriental females, like Madame de Noailles, whimpering (in exotic French) their slave-ecstasies. But when the real singing-woman comes—like Adrastia clashing the cymbals of creative song—humanity will march to new spiritual conquests; when she comes. For the soul of woman (you have been told) is a radiant soul and transmuted into song it will work Orphic miracles.

Some day a woman will write the great poem of bi-une and polarized humanity.

And her poem will be star-like—as is her soul —geometrized, defined, clear.

If ever I deny that "women can excel in letters" may all the wild Lauras of Brescia lacerate tongue and heart. I hold, on the contrary, that women can excel not only in letters, but in great poetry and great art, even as they have excelled in science and in scholarship in our own day. But I hold their success in the great arts depends entirely upon their getting

free from sex-slavery—getting free from the almost inborn belief that life can be interpreted in terms of sex-specialization—getting free from the twittering rhythm of the lady's lute. In a word, my only contention is this:

A STRASBOURG GOOSE CANNOT SING.

The lady, I have said, is an artificial and sex-disfigured product of androcentric civilization. The Renascence made her fine because it loved all things fine and beautiful and it fined down and polished its sex-entertainer, the lady, just as it refined its gold and polished its intaglios.

It was at about the same time the gentleman was born. Mark the difference between the lady and the gentleman. When man in his freedom elevated himself into a gentleman he left the matter of his sex wholly aside—as he has always done in his great affairs of war, trade, exploration, study, the real things of life.

The woman on the other hand was merely female—ladyfied.

The gentleman was a product of Latin civilization. He arose in Italy and France and passed into England with the Norman. What distinguished him? The mark of his high quality was that he treated life (under God) as the

blithest, gallantest and most glorious of all sports. In the adventure of life danger was part of the fun. Whether he went crusading or rode in the tourney he risked his life as gayly as he risked his gold coins in the hazard of a game. (In the same way the young English gentlemen the other day went to France and Flanders to give their lives for England.) That is what man got out of differentiating himself into a gentleman. He learned how to treat life (under God) as a glorious sport. There is no other complete and accurate definition of a gentleman. I don't say a gentleman is the noblest work of God; it is not my duty to assign him a place; I do say that the man who fails to share (with Sidney and Rupert Brooke) this view, that life is to be treated as (under God) a gallant adventure, is anything noble you please, but he is not a gentleman, in the plain historic meaning of the word. And so he has come down to us, holding life to be a light thing (a thing to toss away on a sporting chance) in comparison with what the earth-bound man holds dear. Do you see how splendid was the "rôle of gentleman" man gave himself? And think you he offered womanhood an equivalent

—something that mated with his joyous contempt for life?

What he gave her was ladyhood; and he trinketed her with *oripeaux* of sex, and bade her enthral his wine-heavy senses.

The lady has never been anything but a sex-freak and she will have to be reformed out of existence—with that other, sadder female, victim as she is of man's desire and man's disdain.

VII

THE BATTLE OF THE BREECHES

THIS is the shortest chapter in the book; it is short but it is round and heavy with importance.

I have denounced the dress women wear because it is a badge and an advertisement. It is a badge of human inferiority. It is an advertisement of sex.

Two monstrous and aged problems confront all women—that of freedom in marriage and that of economic independence. They are mighty problems, and both of them are linked inextricably to the dress problem. So long as woman accepts her inferiority and proclaims it by her dress she is not going to be reinstated in the world of human equality. She will remain, exactly what she is, a dehumanized thing—a female and not a woman—a sex-thing separated, whether for maudlin worship or hard disdain, from her true place, as a plain human

being. In a word she cannot recover her status as a human being (man's equal and formidable comrade) until she dresses like a human being, and not like a female set apart for adventures exclusively sexual.

There is the fact for you.

In the smug days of Victorian hypocrisy there was a theory that certain things should not be taken into one's mind even to condemn them.

All of which is false; and I hereby take into my mind every rag and ripple of female raiment —from the lace on the *lingerie* to the dead bird on the hat—and condemn it. And what shall a woman wear?

I might answer the question, in perfect propriety, by replying that a woman should wear what a human being wears.

You wouldn't surely have her dress like a man?

My dear furbelowed adversary, I would have you dress precisely like a man, *when the man dresses like a human being.* What I want you to do is, for decency's sake, to sink the female and be a human being and show it in your dress. There are times when men are, sartorially, quite

as bad as you are. There are times when they prink themselves up and go forth to dance like peacocks in front of some dear female thing. Well, even that is "in nature," as Erasmus was fond of saying. Birds in the mating season wax canorous and at such a time even sensible men dress like fools. When man is a plain human being, not momentarily occupied with his duty to race-preservation, he does not dress like a fool—unless by some brain-lesion he is a fool. No; when he goes about his human business in the world he dresses like a human being—as Woman should. The time to look at a man, if you would see him when he is humanly at his best, is when he goes out to kill something or somebody—that is, when he is bent on war or sport or games, killing men or animals or time. It is when he is displaying these spluttering, destructive and romantic energies of his that he is most emphatically himself—he is *ipsissimus*. So if you want to see him dressed like a human being you must not take him capering in a ball-room or snooping round a stage-entrance or handing round tea-cups or singing to a lute. Take him with a gun or take him at his sports and games. Then indeed he has clothed his

human body properly for the work in hand—which is the sane work, nothing more or less, of being a human being. Then, indeed, he has approximated the garmenting best fitted to his human needs at his present stage of evolution.

Vestment is the direct expression of the manners and morals of a nation. It is the result of a nation's habitudes.

Now the sputtering male, in his incurable romanticism, has never taken anything quite so seriously as playing games; and when he dresses himself for this serious part of his life, he forgets his Don Juan rôle, and dresses solely to suit the needs of the human being.

Therefore, I say, the woman, when she is casting about for human garments, must study her human comrade at play. It is from his sport-garments she will get what she needs. Already when she hunts she gets into the riding-clothes men have found best for the work of riding to hounds. (No really good woman can even see a horse, galloping in a paddock, without thinking covetously of riding-breeches.) Already, when she goes up in the air—I mean in an aëroplane—she goes up in leathers. Already she strides breeched across the golf-links.

It is half the battle. And since she has gained this much of her right to dress like a human being in the world of sports, that is the line along which she should go on fighting—it is the line of least resistance. It is along that line she has got the men going and she should keep hammering away on it.

And what a battle it has been!

You know, as I do, there have always been brave insurgent women, who fought against the law that decreed they should walk the streets of life in degrading sex-advertising rags. I remember out of some past that even that tragic fool, Marie Antoinette, tried once to break out of her baleful femalism and be a woman.

In those days men wore a hunting-hood called a *catogan*. It was, rather, a sort of cap that fell back over the head, shielding the neck; Spanish fishermen still wear them. One afternoon Marie Antoinette clapped a *catogan* on her blond head and strolled daringly about the gardens and halls of Versailles. (To be exact the date was May 18, 1783.) The good, obese man, her husband—he had the silliest soul that was ever wrapped up in tallow—peered from a window and saw her.

And what do you fancy the poor, pompous fool of a man did?

Promptly he put a woman's *chignon* on his silly head, ornamented it with tall feathers and diamonds, tied round his naked fat throat a necklace of emeralds, and went mincing into the great hall where the court stood waiting his appearance.

The queen burst into laughter.

"What's the meaning of this?" she asked, when she got her breath.

"Madame," said the silly ass, wagging his *chignon*, "there was nothing else to do. Since you have taken MY *coiffure* I have had to take yours."

And Marie Antoinette, says the old chronicler (I think it was Monsieur Bachaumont), went shame-facedly to her *cabinet de toilette*, and when she reappeared it was in a woman's head-dress and "the *catogan* was forever banished from the toilette of women."

Only it wasn't; and in this persistence of women to get a man's cap on their heads I see promise of a human future for them; for in the year 1884, as you may read in the *Temps* for

December 16, of that year, every smart woman in Paris stuck a *catogan* on her defiant head.

Well, Louis' silly head, equally silly with a *chignon* or without one, was chopped off and I don't know what else it was good for; and the poor, foolish, rebellious head that wore the *catogan* fell, too, into the basket of sawdust under the guillotine. What they left is a lesson which is doubly precious because imbeciles will laugh at it. In the frivolous anecdote of Marie Antoinette and the riding-cap—the pendant falling on her white neck where metal was to fall—women may see a way to regain the human equality they have lost, since they were thrust into a sex-coop.

Make it your oriflamme, my brave girl—that hunting-cap of Versailles. Go for the sporting-clothes of man and when you have got them on, you will be already nearly human and the rest of your victories will lie ready to your hand! Be a breeched woman—a femoralian woman—*mulier braccata!*

"But I shouldn't look well in them," you say; faint and far-off and feminine I hear a little voice saying: "But I shouldn't look well, you know."

As a matter of fact every woman who approaches, even, the normal type of humanity looks well in them. It is only the women, unhappy victims of life, who have had fat bred on to the wrong parts of their bodies by generations of coop-life indolence, who need shudder away from them. In time a sane, human way of life will eliminate these Chitrini women. You must have seen, here and there, human beings who were also women and had not lost, merely because they were women, the typical form of the race. You have seen the Italian peasant woman. Lithe and strong and straight she walks the world—lithe and straight she takes a header into the waters of Thrasymene. You have seen the gentlewoman of England. These two types rise in mind as the frankest, free-est, least sex-bound, least tyrannized over by hypocrisy, of all modern women—unless I place beside them the hard riding girls of the far-West. The Italian peasant, stepping out of her skirt, to go about her work of gathering the reeds in Lake Thrasymene, is like a Greek athlete. The Englishwoman, riding to hounds, is as lean, tense, muscular, hardy as the fox she hunts—and as fit to run for her life. (And

alongside of her race those hard-bitted, lean-sided fillies, the daughters of her house.)

So I answer the little voice, faint and far-off, but with notes of the "fever bird" in it: If you are a normal human being you will "look all right" in the normal kind of dress men have created for their human play. If, on the other hand, you are a Chitrini woman you might not look all right. And I am sorry for you. But women are marching some-whither; they are going toward dress-equality—toward the plain equality of human dress; and they cannot stop the procession because some poor, fat, bewildered Chitrini women have got in their way. Woman's march toward humanization has begun; it is going strong; and it will take more than the modest woman and more than the fat woman and more than the "fever bird" to stop it.

I hail the Human Being coming down the road; she is woman, breeched and gaitered and coated and capped; and before her I see the panting little zenana women, scurrying away in the flapping indecency of skirts, vanishing into a merciful twilight. They vanish into a merciful twilight and squat there unregarded.

No one heeds them. They can be as feminine as they like. They can stick pieces of metal in their ears and in their little noses. They can put lace on their legs. Like maniacs at a dust-heap they can pick up everything they see and put it on their inane heads—bits of straw and feathers and pieces of broken glass and tags of leather and colored rags. And then, being real ladies and quite feminine, they can hold an anti-suffrage convention—there by the dust-heap, in the twilight.

As for me, I shall go forward and have word with that human comrade coming down the road—the woman who claps a cap on her head when she goes out of doors, unless she prefers to walk about under a crown of human hair.

I do not say the dress men wear for sports is the ideal dress for human beings; but it's the best we have in our civilization. It is the best thing women can get to-day. I am perfectly certain that once they have adopted this kind of dress they will make many improvements in it. And the men will be quick enough to take on these improvements. So in the end you will have a tolerable dress in which human beings,

men and women alike, can go about in *when they are concerned in human business.*

You see what I am driving at?

The human dress is for humans occupied in human affairs; it belongs to men and women alike.

I do not care tuppence how a woman dresses when she is bent on sex-capture. Then she may wear what she pleases. She may put on silks and spangles and all the fal-lals that she has found, by experience, help to blow a man down. When she goes out dressed like that men will know what she is about—and can take to cover. Let me say it again: if a woman wants to be that man-capturing kind of female I do not care tuppence what she wears. (At all events she is frank; she is advertising her business.)

When, however, a woman is leading the normal life of a human being, she should (if she has any self-respect) dress like a normal human being.

She should dress toward the norm of humanity and not toward freakishness of sex.

And her skirt, *just because it is a badge and advertisement of sex,* belongs on the dust-heap —with the dead bird on her hat.

VIII

INSURGENTS OF DISHONOR AND CRIME

I HAVE no wish," said Maeve, "to let a man of Connaught get the upper hand of me."

There is in the legendary phrase a little of woman's eternal story, for, to the thinking woman, every man is of Connaught.

As far back as you can go in social history, and in every formation of society, you will find women fighting, with valor or craft, as insurgents. Think upon this for a moment. Nothing is more logical. Because justice and right are violated they do not cease to exist. Violated right and violated justice always bring about insurgency; and just in proportion to the injustice is the vehemence of the rebellion. It may take the form of open crime. It may take the form of poisonous craft. In one form or another it will find expression. Now the man-made law laid upon Woman has violated both

right and justice. Above all it has never permitted her to balance equably her two sacred duties—to self and to the race. Therefore through all her social history one compelling purpose runs; and that purpose has been to annul the evil law laid upon her.

The law, whether hard and tyrannous or soft and disgusting, she found almost always incarnate in man—in man and in the selfishness he erected into dogmas and the prejudices he formulated in creeds.

Then the work of her life—why should one skulk away from a truth?—became the conquest of man.

For that conquest heroines used all their valor; princesses used all their wit and charm and learning; and for that conquest their weaker sisters developed all their criminal qualities—fitted themselves with the only weapons that lay ready to their hands—poison-weapons——

Two evil women: the criminal and the prostitute; both are the products of violated right and violated justice; they are the natural products of a social organization which has throttled woman's right to personal independence and

vitiated and debased her duty to race-preservation. These two types have grown up in our society as naturally as fungi grow on a dung-hill. The fact is written in the very physical stigmata with which the types are marked. It is written in the shape of their heads and in the typical malformation of their bodies. They are branded from head to heel with the marks of their bad and patient and pitiable insurgency.

One evening when I was thinking out this book I sat in a *cabaret* in Broadway.

The little women passed, fine, polished, rhythmic—swathed in perfume.

And each perfume was the symbol of a woman; and each woman was the symbol of a sin.

Little Women with painted hands and painted mouths and tossing heads—mere light innocuosities, you had said; but I looked into their eyes and the eyes were deadly. The baleful eyes of bad women! Then I knew; they were not *hetairæ*—light-o'-loves; they were desperate warriors. They were abject and they were redoubtable. They were the guerillas of the Woman-army, rifling and stabbing on the smoky edges of the battlefield, taking what toll they

could of the male weaklings, deserters, wounded.

For a long time I sat there thinking. Gradually one truth was driven home to my brain—and to my heart. These women were predestined products of a society which has degraded and deformed womanhood—exiled her from common humanity; and, evil as their way of fighting is, it is still insurgency against the burden of intolerable laws. A bad insurgency—O, an insurgency rooted in dishonor! (Olympe de Gouges showed a better kind when she laid her aspiring head under the knife of the guillotine.) Bad as that way of life is you have not understood it at all unless you see in it a protest against the very laws that have called it into being. It is rooted in dishonor? Yes; a thousand times yes; but the dishonor in which it is rooted is the economic dishonor of man-made civilization—the sexual dishonor of homolegic society. That and nothing else.

And I looked at these women of the dark war—each woman the symbol of a sin and an oppression—and I saw that they were scarred with antique wounds and marked with hereditary stigmata. They were abnormal as lap-

dogs. They were deformed as Strasbourg geese. They were heirs of old heredities. The human type was almost obliterated in them, so long had they been bred to sex. Heads of slight cranial capacity; intensity of pigment in eyes and hair; dwarfed feet, for the daughters of dishonor like the daughters of crime almost all have little feet; short stretch of arm and leg; fat molded absurdly upon the body—as on the Chitrini woman; all the tragic, inevitable malformations, which mark the woman who is not a human being but (the word persists) a doll of Eros.

God help them!

Women degraded into mere perfumes and symbols of sin; and yet—do you see the wonder of it?—still striving with frantic and ignoble heroism to annul the law laid upon them and to recover their share of human rights and human justice.

And you, the lordlier women, leading out your bannered forces to political and economic battlefields will fail—as you should fail—if you neglect these dreary little insurgents of the *cabaret*. They, too, are fighting—as best they can; they are waging identically the same bat-

tle, for precisely the same ends; and, like you, they are using the makeshift weapons they can snatch up as they run. Accept no liberty, O lordlier women, which does not give freedom to these weak and ruthless little insurgents of the red-lit night! Take nothing you cannot share with them, *for until you have solved their problem you cannot solve your own—good woman and bad, you are clamped together like the two sides of a coin; and there can be no freedom for one unless there is freedom for the other.*

Still sitting in the *cabaret* in Broadway; still watching the bright and brazen figures pass—as they have passed down the corridors of time, for their adventures are old as man's muddled attempt at civilization; still studying the tarnished allurements of bad women; and I thought this:

Evolution does not go hopping along—*per saltum.* These women have been generations in the making. Man spent ages, roguishly collaborating with nature, to create this type—to specialize it out of raw humanity. It cannot be changed in a day. Not easily can malformed womanhood be led back to the norm. You cannot expect to get rid of this specialized type,

branded with all the stigmata of bad heredity, in one generation or two or three. Therefore I say to the lordlier women who are creating the new bi-une society: *A place must be found for them, in and not outside of the social organization*—or they must be massacred *en bloc;* and having said this I leave the lordlier women to think it over.

Meanwhile, God help them—the light little sisters, against whom life is a conspiracy.

It was in a *cabaret* in Broadway; I saw some of the conspirators; I saw the old Don Juans, shameless, disquieting and gay; and I saw the hard-faced and predatory young males—belching cigarette smoke from their nostrils. And looking at the conspirators I did not blame the little insurgents of dishonor for being cruel, even as they are weak. Deformed into mere sex-creatures, why should they not nourish venom in their hearts? What think you of the soprani of the Vatican? Of the legless dwarfs the German dukes carved out of man's humanity? Do you fancy they did not eat rancor and drink venom? I hope they did; I know they did. And when Lamia pulls down the victorious young

prig on his way to Athens—and binds him in poisonous ribbons—she is taking her due vengeance for violated justice in a prig-made world. As she prowls on the edge of life, why should she not take what cruel reprisal she can? Why should she not pull down the wounded enemy and knife the crippled soldier? Why should she not take her vengeance?

It is in nature.

If you breed a male slum-child to dishonor you cannot look to him for honorable living.

Yes; and when a woman has been bred—in a man-centered society—for infamy, the one spark of nobility that kindles in her is the pathetic insurgency that animates her when she takes her vengeance on a staggering male.

The other night in New York one of these women—starved and shamed out of life—determined to die; she went into the street and hailed a strange man; and when he had fallen asleep in the curtained darkness of the infamy which was her "home," she turned on all the gas-jets and lay down beside him; and death came to them both—so the woman went straight to the judgment seat, dragging with her the

dazed soul of an unknown man, and demanded God's judgment on him and on his race.

Her duty to herself?

As best she can she strives, in a welter of sad and dirty things, to affirm herself. If the soul in her wakens to vengeance at least it is her soul that wakes. Then for a moment a flame shoots up in her that illumines and justifies her debased life.

Heroism is not only of the scaffold and the battlefield. The poor creature who has been dehumanized—exiled from womanhood—thrust down into foul femalism—is praiseworthy only when she rebels.

Every ounce of vengeance she can get is gold on her head.

It shows that beneath the paint and perfume there still beats the hungry, aspiring human heart, which knows it was made for glory and not for shame; it shows that in her bad and slavish and cruel way, she, too, is striving to bring back justice and right—violated and outcast, even as she. So in a wild, forlorn hope she throws her life away; and goes where there may be justice for woman—and right.

(*"The crowd laughs at her blackguard oaths, the men jeer and wink at each other—*
"Miserable! I do not laugh at your oaths nor jeer you!")

Daughters of dishonor and products of a man-made past they look to Woman for enfranchisement. And a woman-rectified society alone can set them free—as you shall see. For if their lives are rooted in dishonor the immensely significant fact is that they are rooted also in economic dependence. The masculine part of humanity could never have got them where they are, if it had not forced them there by industrial oppression—beaten them down to it by starvation in a world where they found no properly paid work to do. I think I can show you that this bad business can be set right, when Woman has, at last, assumed her heavy share of responsibility for the right conduct of the world.

THE FEMALE OFFENDERS

I pause for a moment with the criminal woman.

She, too, is a scarred and stigmatized degen-

erate, as artificially produced as the Chitrini woman or (our old friend) the Strasbourg goose. Indeed it is curious that this same zenana fatness is a mark of crime. The percentage of fat women, especially among assassins and notably among poisoners, is remarkable. Man fattened up his mate and naturally enough she turned and poisoned him—in sheer horror of fat.

The statistics gathered by Madame Tarnowsky, who is the chief authority on modern criminology, show that the majority of women criminals are all of the coop-type—being fat and small. What is rarest is to find a woman criminal who approaches the normal height and weight of her humanity. They run to abnormal deposits of adipose tissue, after the fashion of the Chitrini woman; they have short, narrow feet; if they are not below normal height they have shot up into some deformity. You might expect to find virile characteristics among some of the more desperate women criminals and in fact you do. But what is it you find exactly?

You find certain strong characteristics, which are commonly associated with men, merely because men have hogged all the virile employ-

ments and virile games of life. In reality they are not masculine characteristics. They are human characteristics and a woman has identically the same right to them that a man has. They belong to the race. Now when you see them in a woman—in some valiant and formidable beldame of the drawing-room or in some stalwart hag of the desert—you say: "Oh, isn't she the masculine thing!"

What you should say is that she got a bit of what was coming to her—a trifle of what humanity owes her. And if this woman with virile characteristics takes to crime it is because in all ill-balanced society she, too, is out of balance. Parts of her are over-femalized; and they are at odds with her virile, human self; and so she flops over into crime. Given a normal environment in which she could develop all her qualities of a human being—her comradely righteousness and amenity as well as her violent strength—she would hate crime as she hates anything else that is disorderly and absurd. Crime is merely disorder; and that is a thing no woman loves.

Murder by knife or poison, infanticide, theft —these are the crimes women commit; and be-

hind each crime stands, stark and evident, the reason for it: Woman's imprisonment in a coop of sex-laws and economic restrictions. Women do not kill for fun, as men do now and then, or rob for the sake of adventure. They kill for sex reasons and steal because they are, one and all, victims of industrial oppression. Another way of putting it is to state that born criminals are much rarer among women than among men. Indeed the "born female criminal" is, as it were, doubly exceptional—both as a woman and as a criminal; for criminals are an exception among civilized people and women are an exception among criminals, their natural form of retrogression (in a man-arranged society) being toward prostitution and not toward crime. Doubly exceptional, then, the criminal woman has often shown that she can be in criminality more terrible than the male.

More terrible?

I do not know, for the pull of one pole of your magnet equals the push of the other.

At all events she is terrible in crime.

And the pleasant conclusion I get from this is that she can be quite as bad a human being as a man can, which gives her equality any-

how, though it may not be of a laudable sort.

Why does she commit crime?

Love is very rarely a cause of her crimes, for love, with its spirit of self-sacrifice and its impulse toward perfection, has no kinship with crime, which is in its essence insatiably selfish.

She steals to get dress and ornaments, so she can blow down a man—since he is the "provider."

She poisons out of avarice—lest the little fortune should go to another and she be left to starve.

She kills for vengeance—because her womanhood has been humiliated. (A woman in France stabbed the man who had wronged her and, as he lay dying, she fired his house, crying aloud: "May God and the Holy Virgin do the rest!" which was an awful appeal to ultimate justice.)

I believe the new and better society will see in the "born criminal," man or woman, merely a mentally defective person. As for the common or occasional criminal among women she is almost always—say always—a victim of the coop and the laws of the coop. A prison-sister once said, pointing to the convict women:

"They do not commit crimes out of evil passions."

I think in the main that is true. Women have no passion for disorder. And when the cooplaws have been lifted, not abruptly, but surely, they will revert to the norm of womanhood. The fat will fall from them and their feet will grow. Normal they will stand up, without violence or avarice, in a world of normal humanity.

IX

THE THREE RIGHTS OF WOMAN

THE curve of this book has brought you face to face with the immense problem of the age—the woman problem in its two aspects, economic and social.

You have seen what she was in a past of large and well-nigh animal freedom. And you saw what men made of her when they specialized her—not for maternity—but for sex-indulgence. You have not failed to see that the grip of that bad past is still upon her. And if that is true for her it is also true for you, my bond-brother in humanity, for your life, like hers, is shaped more by the dead than by the living. (It is a melancholy truth that dead beliefs, like dead men, never die.) And then as you studied woman, on her thorny way through the world, you began to see, vaguely, what she is coming to be. You recognized, I think, that the most significant feature of modern life is the amaz-

ing Becomingness of Woman. And, vaguely, across a troubled present, you gained a vision of what she is destined to be, when her dark problem shall have found a solution even tolerably exact.

I have spoken of it as twofold. I should better, perhaps, have said at once that it is threefold, like everything else in life and nature. Everything is a trinity. Whenever you start to pull apart the web of life you find it is woven of three threads. The very light you flash up in your study when you sit down to read a book comes running to you along three wires.

And the tri-une problem of woman?

Duty to self and duty to race—her sex-relationship to man, or briefly, marriage and children; now this depends entirely upon her economic status; and her economic situation depends, in turn, upon her status as a citizen. These three problems are, indeed, one problem, for they are as inextricably joined as the three walls of a prism—the three sides of a triangle.

Three inalienable rights:

The right to precisely the same human freedom to which man has a right;

The right to the exact degree of freedom in

the economic and industrial world which is accorded man—the right to take "all labor for her province";

And the "right of the city"—*in civitatem*—the equal and unhampered right which any other human being is permitted to exercise in the state, whether that right consists in voting or being voted for, in making laws or in administering laws.

And there you are.

It is the economic side of the problem that first confronts us; though it is, you will bear in mind, but one face of the prism.

Backed up against it is the evil misunderstanding of the true relations between the sexes which has poisoned organic society and begotten most of its misery and decay. And one might state it all in twenty-eight sober words: "If you want a goose to be all liver you must coop it up and, since a cooped thing cannot get its own food, you must feed it."

Woman has had for ages to eat out of a man's hand.

There is the cause and origin of her physical inferiority and of her civic degradation. So long has this thing been going on that she has

come not only to acquiesce in it, but even to be rather proud of it. Indeed when she wants to praise the man in the house she calls him, horribly, a "good provider"—and, in her poor, parasitic way, she never for one moment realizes how sinister and sickening is the confession she thereby makes.

A good provider!

O, woman, as you lie there among the soft cushions—you and your lapdog, together, waiting to be fed—does nothing writhe in you and protest? (I know that woman and her lapdog; she fancies, some times, that both she and Fifi may "break away from the group-soul" in some dim future and become active candidates for human incarnation.)

THE RIGHT TO PHYSICAL WORK AND ITS WAGE

The beginning of the revolution, which is carrying woman forward to victorious equality in a human world, was when she demanded the right to work and the training that should fit her for the work. The old males of the tribe were down on her like a shot.

What they said was: "My dear, don't be so

unfeminine! A woman's work is in the home."

And those of the old males who had a few tags of scholarship (as I have) told her to go worship that goddess Deverra. As a matter of fact what they meant was that work being a tolerably interesting thing, they would keep it for themselves and give the women the drudgery in which there is neither glory nor profit. The mean and sordid they left to women. And the more they talked about chivalry and ladyship and woman's place being in the home (salaaming to Deverra) the more they piled upon the common women, who had not been specialized for sex-amusement, the direst and dirtiest drudgery of their social organization.

(May I pause here and announce what true chivalry is? True chivalry, and undefiled, to a woman is this: to treat her as a combatant in your own class and not to consider you are doing her any honor by allowing her weight either for sex or age.)

There have always been women cleaning the sewers of life; there have always been women delving and plowing and carrying stones on their heads and squatting at the potter's wheel and bending over the quern. Woman has always

had an unchallenged right to do the world's dirty drudgery—for pay so niggling a man wouldn't stoop to pick it up; so he waited until the woman had earned it and then took it away from her. Her economic liberation grew nearer when the brave new voice of new wise womanhood was heard declaring: "We claim, to-day, all labor for our province!"

That meant independence.

What answer made the old males of the tribe?

Of course, since the "*ewig-weibliche*" is still hauling them along and will so haul them along until they shrivel up into senility, they said first of all that it was unfeminine, and that really women mustn't "unsex" themselves; and regretfully they called up the dear Victorian phantoms of soft fools in poke bonnets and sandals, flopping about with the vapors. They said work was unfeminine. And when the rebellious women pointed out that drudgery was quite as unfeminine as work and that as a matter of fact they didn't care tuppence whether it was feminine or unfeminine, the old males put their heads (and horns) together and held consultation. Biologist rubbed horns with physi-

ologist. And the astounding answer they found was this: "The physical frailness of the gentler sex"—the gentler sex!—"the physical frailness of the gentler sex makes them unfit for that work and those occupations which man has rightly kept for himself."

You see; she was strong enough for the sewer, but not for the factory; she was, in fact, too "frail" to do any work that was worth a decent wage.

Of course the old males were not such fools as they appeared to be; I do not suppose any of them believed in this theory of woman's physical inferiority; what they saw was that if a woman could get a job, as a man can, she would get the job's pay and so good-by to her economic dependence—and so good-by to the coop and the enlarged liver—and so good-by to the "ever female" and all the other nastinesses of sex-pedlary. This was the certain and unpleasant cause of most of the opposition, which kept women out of scores of profitable employments during the last few decades. The silly fable of woman's physical inferiority has exploded itself. Where such an inferiority existed it was due to coop-life and defective training.

Wherever woman has had man's chance to develop her body she has made a body as good as his. Even when she has been banished from muscle-making sports and labors she has—it is nature's way—got herself a kind of equivalent for man's more developed strength in her larger vital resistance and steadier endurance. Where man got physical strength out of work, woman got out of drudgery superior viability.

All this talk about woman's permanent physical inferiority was knocked on the head by the war.

Germany set her own women to work, digging trenches and, in order not to be accused of favoritism——

But take it in other words than mine:

"Harnessing women to plow:

"Among the horrible features of this horrible war is the enslavement of non-combatants. Women and children to the number of twenty-five thousand have been taken by force from their homes and sent here and there at the will of the military authorities to work in the fields. The women between fourteen and fifty-five years of age were taken from Lille, Roubaix and

Turcoing districts and put to work in the fields."

And the frail things hauled the plow.

England went about the matter more slowly. (The reason England is never in a hurry is that she knows she is immortal.) Gradually she opened every field of labor to women and discovered, in a world at war, that there was nothing woman could not do—nothing! The actual influx of women into wage-working occupations in the first year of the war was nearly half a million. They invaded every one of the so-called "masculine fields." Naturally the first rush was toward munition work, for once again England was fighting, as she has always fought, for the cause of human liberty against the old feudal forces of Cæsarism gone mad.

How they swarmed into the munition factories those women of mind and muscle and heart! And what upstanding human beings they were—in breeches, gaiters, blouses and caps—trig and workmanlike women! Though they knew it not, even as they filled the shells, they were creating the new world for women and (thank God!) for men. I think you see the significance of this procession of millions of

women, in human attire, going to work. They had conquered not only the right to economic independence but the right to go abroad in public without sex-badges.

And I can foresee the revolution in society there will be when the young women of America do as much. How many young women are there in Vassar, Wellesley, Smith and a hundred other schools, who have undeformed human bodies, refined by sport? I do not know how many tens of thousands. Can you picture this young army marching out in bloused, breeched, gaitered, capped decency of human attire? First, I fancy, they danced round the campus bonfires where flamed all the badges of sex-attire. It was a glorious holocaust. The flames laughed as they leaped. And into them the free, young, human beings tossed their sex-ribbons and laces and the slave-rings from their ears and wrists; and then in one wild burst for freedom kicked off their indecent skirts, thus proclaiming themselves human beings. And the smoke of their burning skirts rose like burnt incense to heaven; and was acceptable. Think you, this young, brave army will not march? It will march; and it will make a bal-

anced world. A few old Don Juans will snort; a few feathered fools in *lingerie* will squeal. But the best of mankind will hold out kindly hands, and say: "Come on, young humans, and join us in our work and in our play. Jove! but we are glad you are out of the coop. We've long wanted you to know us as we really are. Come on over—work with us and play with us —you'll find we are a decent lot on the whole. And if there are any rotters or sex-maniacs about, don't you worry about them. You punch the maniacs and we'll punch the rotters and between us we'll clean up the world." And when will the army march? Possibly I may be disclosing one of the secret strategies of social evolution, but I might as well tell you it will march before eight years have swung by—and may you be there to see!

War opened for women the doors of the labor market in England, unhurrying because immortal. At first she did not enter the labor market as a physical unit equal in value to man. She lacked physical training; she had, too,—since the men were off to the wars—the double burden of family life and industry to carry. At first there was evidence of strain. There was

a good deal of evidence of fatigue, but not much of serious breakdown. *The better food which better wages brought within the reach of women enabled them to endure successfully the strain of long hours and heavy work.*

One truth got itself established; the best results from women were obtained from the eight-hour day, a truth men learned long ago.

These workers came from all classes; they were factory hands, college girls, gentlewomen —all kinds. They took up successfully every branch of work. They were policewomen. They made good as foresters. They worked in the shipyards. They worked in metal and with machines. In short all along the line they won their way to the positions men had held, and filled them. ("The frailness of the gentler sex"—Heaven help the horned physiologist who goes up against the frail working woman of the Clyde!)

Women went into the trades and captured them. You think they will be chucked out after the war? A wiser view is expressed in the British Association's report:

"The final position of women in these trades," it says, "will depend on the ability of

men and women, in the period during which skilled work is in large demand, to adjust their respective spheres of work or to agree upon the conditions under which they may enter the industry upon terms of equality."

The clock cannot be turned back.

I say that whatever else was won in the war women won free trade in labor and equality of training, physical and intellectual, for the work. And as noticed in this report, there is a corollary: they must win equal pay. Employers must accept the principle of equal pay for equal work, whether it is done by man or woman.

And above all the wrong-headed workingman must accept it.

He has been a silly ostrich about this matter of wage for work. Now and then he has leaped up in the air and screamed that some worker, slightly yellow, having come from Japan, was working for too small a wage; and he wanted him kicked across the frontier. And when he wasn't howling about the Jap he was moaning that the women were taking his jobs away from him, because they were *willing to work for less wage.* His theory was that the way to get on

in the world was to keep some one else from getting on.

Now let me tell that honest workingman, as he fills his pipe, that so far from protesting against the admission of women to the trades and occupations from which they have been excluded, he and his syndicates and his labor-unions should organize strikes in order to force employers to pay women the same wage they pay men.

And that would end sex-competition.

A brave woman, who was Olive Schreiner, declared:

"We claim to-day all labor for our province!

"Those large fields in which it would appear sex plays no part, and equally those in which it plays a part."

It has not quite come yet; it is on the way; more than a promise of it the gods of war brought to her in their wet and bloody hands.

The solution of woman's economic problem?

Equal right with man to enter the fields of physical and intellectual work; equal training and education to fit her for the work; and equal right with man to the same wage for the work,

whether that wage be paid in money or in public office or in civic dignities.

THE RIGHT TO MENTAL LABOR AND ITS REWARD

Of the eight million women who are earning their living in the United States of America, about one-third are engaged in hard manual labor. There are perhaps nearly the same number engaged in clerical work of one kind and another. It is in the learned professions, in scholarship and art, that they have made the most astonishing conquests. In spite of the repression of ages—in spite of dwarfed, defective, one-sided education—in spite of the fact that they have been shoo-ed away from the real activities of life, upon which alone the intellect can feed—in spite of the fact that they have not been allowed to get at the raw materials of life out of which all art must be fashioned; in spite, I say, of all these detriments women have made astounding progress in all the fields of labor where the first requisite is brain.

It is a perfectly logical victory.

The basis of art is order—not disorder.

The work of the brain in science, letters, art,

scholarship is to bring order out of chaos. And the brain of woman, as you know, is essentially an ordering brain. Back in time when it was merely a spark, striving to affirm itself in denser matter, it was hard and bright—it was a star. And it is in the hard, bright things that women have won their intellectual triumphs. They are masters of outline and definition; where the out-raying, spray-like mind of man is idealistic, woman's mind is realistic; it insists upon form—it demands definition. There is no peace in the strong heart of woman until she has brought her share of chaos into planetary order—suns and satellites attending strictly to business.

What you see in the sculpture of Camille Claudel is just this very faculty of creating divine order.

When she looks at nature she sees that it is striving, in root and branch, to express a principle; and she defines, affirms, stellarizes nature's blind tendency toward order.

Which is art; and with Mademoiselle Claudel it is great art.

Madame Berthe Morisot is a painter of exquisite delicacy and charm; and this charm and

this delicacy many a man might have attained —indeed Watteau and Chardin and Fragonard and Latour were far more delicate; what belongs to Madame Morisot in her work is its lucidity as of a star, its saneness as of a triangle—for, like every woman, she is both luminous and explicit.

It cannot be said too often: spray and star —man's primal principle is out-going, scattering, transforming, creating, adventuring, romantic; and over against it, like the other pole of a magnet, is the woman-principle, accurate, geometrized, collective, defining, order-making. And of these two principles life is made.

Now women are strongest in the arts, sciences, intellectualities in which the thing of prime importance is order. Men are best in out-raying, intuitional things. (War, for example, is one of their sad and splendid feats of disorder; it is their kind of recreation which ends in "re-creation"; and so out of the pull and push—out of the balanced forces—humanity is getting what kind of perfection it deserves.)

The first use women made of their half-freedom was to turn to the exact things of the mind

—to the exact arts, like sculpture and painting, to exact scholarship and the exact sciences. There was no attraction for them in sputtering romance. Hemmed in as they were by bed-curtains, and curious also in the processes of life, they turned first to the science of healing. There were scores and hundreds of women-doctors in antiquity and the Middle Ages.

(Among these dead *medicæ* may I signal the name of that tall woman, Antiochis, whose cures were foolishly thought to be miracles?)

There were women-doctors in the school of Galerno. There were hundreds of them in the convents—their medieval places of refuge. Did not the sisters of the Paraclet study surgery on the good advice of Abélard? And, in France, for example, the women doctors and surgeons and apothecaries had their way until the eighteenth century, when the Faculty of Paris waged war on them and destroyed them, in order that men might have a monopoly of the business.

("Man's way," quoth he, "and clove her to the brain.")

To-day she has got back a little of her place in the medical world, even in France. She has fought her way into the legal profession; and

it is certain as the sun that this will be one of the fields in which she will win her brightest intellectual victories.

For the brain of woman is essentially a reasoning brain, lucid and explicit.

No sillier sophism was ever uttered than the old taunt that Woman could feel justly but reasoned awry; that she had an animal instinct toward what was right but could not think it out. As a hard, gray matter of fact Woman is pitiless in her logic. Always she reasons right. It is only when her heart gets in her way—some pathetic male tugging at her heart-strings as though they were apron-strings—that she stumbles. Always she reasons right. She is never wrong-headed. It is only her feelings that get out of hand and this, even, is due to the fact that her wholly artificial life for generations has fattened her feelings up and made them wobbly. Woman is indeed mercilessly logical, when her emotions are not concerned.

Every man knows how easy it is to break a woman's heart—the difficult thing is to break her head.

Women have succeeded as doctors and lawyers; it is as magistrates they will give the full

measure of their intellectual clarity, precision and undeviating, equilateral sense of justice. We shall have a larger and finer administration of justice in our courts when some of our sputtering, male-gowned judges are replaced by clear-minded, logic-ruled women. And you know it as well as I do. I said, on another page, the man who does not take his wife's advice is a fool; and the nation which does not take the advice of its women is also a fool.

(New York, for example, is a city of six million fool-power.)

There is ample proof of Woman's preëminence in intellectual coördination in the success she has won in exact scholarship, in mathematics, in philology, in sociology, chemistry, biology—in all the sciences where exactness of observation, precision of statement and flawless ratiocination are demanded. And when she comes more strongly into the arts it is in just such arts she will best succeed. When she has written good fiction it has been fiction of this kind. (Her romances are rubbish.) Have you noticed the music she composes? Always it has form. Always it comes from her active, order-making brain. And what it unfailingly

acks is the emotional urge—the deep, heavy, waying mass of emotion the incurably romanic man gets into his music. I do not say that, fter she has reconquered her intellectual parity n the world, Woman may not, as a relaxation, et about cultivating the neglected emotional ide of her nature. She may, but I am not at ll sure of it. Every woman knows she has a tar inside. She is not worried by the fear she loes not exist. Now it is unquestionably true hat man is worried by precisely that fear. He s horribly afraid that his sputtering soul is oing to ray out into nothingness. And the nly way he can persuade himself of his imnortality is to keep staring at himself and bendng anxiously over his emotions—whence the rofound emotional depth of his music and the vild beauty of his lyric songs. If for one hour ıe loses the centralization of interest in self he s afraid he will stop sputtering and go out. That is why man is selfish. A woman doesn't ıave to be selfish. She knows, with calm certainty, that her star can take care of itself.

Enfin: There is not one edge or corner—ıillock or mount—of the field where mental

work is done to which Woman has not proved her homestead right.

She has proved her right to labor there.

How about the reward?

WOMAN'S RIGHT IN THE STATE

Woman will never get her due reward for her work, physical or mental, until she has conquered her "right of the city." She can get ultimate justice only out of complete civic equality.

I am not going to discuss the battle for Woman's suffrage. That battle, even in the United States, is already won save for the last forlorn trenches held so valiantly by the old males of the tribe and their vehement little confederates —the ringleted and pantaletted ladies of the tribe.

The victorious idea of woman suffrage grows, spreads, unifies. And, of course, it cannot be stopped.

A dozen pendulums in a room, starting at different lengths, end by swinging all together.

So the states of the Union are gradually swinging into the rhythm set (how long ago!)

by historic Wyoming and caught by Colorado, Idaho, Washington, California, Kansas, Illinois and all the rest of the liberty-loving states. Within eight years—

(You do not mind my being a prophet, do you? I have never had anything but contempt for Proteus, who changed his shape to dodge the peril of prophesying.)

In eight years, I prophesy, every state in the Union will be swinging to the rhythm set by Wyoming in 1869. Of course the last state to come in will be New York, unless indeed it is one of those fine, old Southern states, where chivalry consists in drinking whiskey and flogging a livelihood out of the tattered hides of little child-laborers. Even in those dark states the pendulum will swing to time within eight years. (Which is a melancholy prospect for the "Southern gentleman," for it is tolerably certain that when the women win their civic liberty they will put that tipsy and fusty old humbug to work hoeing cotton.)

In the United States women have practically won the vote. In a future not too distant equal suffrage from sea to sea is a certainty. Very nearly the same thing may be said of England,

but perhaps it would be better to let Mr. H. G. Wells, who is the accredited spokesman for Englishwomen, say it in his own words:

"Women have won the vote. Not the most frantic outbursts of militancy after this war can prevent them from getting it. They have revolutionized the estimate of their economic importance."

And in the essay from which I have quoted there are two forecasts, which fit—as a hand fits into a glove—into the purpose of this book:

"The new free woman is going to be a grave and capable being, soberly dressed and imposing her own decency and neutrality of behavior upon the men she meets. And along the line of sober costume and simple and restrained behavior that the free woman is marking out, the married woman will also escape to new measures of freedom. The plain, well-made dress will oust the ribbon and the décolletage.

"The war is accelerating the emancipation of women from sexual specialization. It is liberating types that will inevitably destroy both the 'atmosphere of gallantry' which is such a bar to friendliness between people of opposite sexes, and that atmosphere of hostile distrust which

is its counterpart in the minds of the oversexual suffragettes.

"The first logical consequence is that the circumstances of the unmarried mother will resemble more than they have hitherto done those of many married mothers; the harsh lines drawn between them will dissolve."

It is along this line evolution is working and it is upon this thought—stated cautiously—I have laid all the emphasis I can.

The Englishwoman is taking her "right of the city"; and the Frenchwoman—though her need of the vote is less, owing to the better balance of French civilization—will unquestionably gain, ere many years have passed, those rights for which the brave Olympe laid down her life. I think, too, Woman's suffrage will, though with greater difficulty, be won by unhappy Germany. The cause for this backwardness you will find lies not only in the harder rule of the man, but in the very perfection of the German women as mothers and home-makers. They have been ruled with a heavy hand, but it is to the honor of German men that their women have not been methodically specialized into puppets for sex-indulgence. It is true they have not been ad-

mitted into the equality of human beings. It is also true they—less than any other race of women—have not been deformed into Dolls of Eros. They have been kept to their race-function. They have been specialized for maternity. And the world has never known mothers more selfless. Yet even in Germany there are indications that the women are learning that, strong as is their duty to the race, equal in strength is their duty to self-preservation; and more and more their cry for civic rights will be heard.

Sooner or later—

In this world, which is conditioned in eternity, it is not of much importance whether evolution moves fast or slow. It is not how fast you ride that matters, but how far.

One thing is certain; before long it will be impossible, in any form of civilized society, to deprive women of their rights to an equal share in the government under which they live. That is why I have said, without rhetoric, that what is on the way is the Woman's age. Already in the states and nations where she has won the vote, one may see a little of what she is going to do, as citizen. She has not found that the vote is a miraculous thing—although in certain

Western states she touched with it the hard rock of drunkenness and water gushed out; but even for prohibition the woman-vote could not always make a miracle. She found, as men have found, that the vote is not everything, though it is the best weapon yet forged for humanity's liberation. And she has demonstrated that if equal, universal suffrage is a failure it is only because democracy, of which it is the expression, is a failure; and that humanity (as has been suspected) lacks perfection.

From what Woman has done with the ballot, in nations and states where she is enfranchised, one may gather certain indications of what a properly polarized society will be. I wish to touch merely the broad and general effects—those that interest humanity at large. When I set out to write this book I spent a year and eight months in lands where women vote, that I might understand the significance of this force new in civic life. And it seems to me that the action of the woman-force in the state may be put in four words:

It makes for equilibrium.

Of course that is a naked statement. Like all naked things—baby or flower—it is simple and

true. I might go into an immense amount of exegesis, but I should add little to the significance of the text.

It makes for balance; it makes for the stability of public and private decencies; it balances thrift against wastefulness; it balances the restrictive against the out-going; in a word it makes for polarization. And what struck me most was that in the free suffrage states you do not get sex-voting. Even in matters where you would think a kind of sex-sentimentalism would pull them together the women did not vote *gregatim*—as sheep go in mobs. *They voted as human beings.* They voted as individuals. They rode across the lines of party, the prejudices of family, the old heredities of table-talk.

Whence I draw two deductions:

Women bring into public affairs a better equilibrium, which is, so far, expressed largely in practical ways—in protests against wastefulness, in insistence upon civic cleanliness and a more perfect competency in the public way of living, and, above all, in demands for the suppression of those public and private indecencies which have grown out of the sex-specialization

and sex-indulgence, which were created and which were upheld by man-made legislation. This, as broadly as it can be stated, is what may be deduced from candid study of the equal suffrage communities. The second deduction I have made concerns the woman herself.

What effect upon her has this new, hard-won enfranchisement?

First of all it fortifies her individuality.

And that, by the way, is the only reason for which she and you and I are going through the rather trying experience of living for a while in dense matter; it is that the human ego may fortify itself and develop itself.

The mere right to cast a vote gives woman a sense of human dignity. In that lies her real enfranchisement. I do not think any man can understand—unless he has worn chains and lived under the weight of another's will—the serene glory in which the free woman stands erect and looks about her into a free world. She is indeed a new woman. She who has had to think through another, feel through another, ask assistance of another, begins to realize that she can think, feel, act for herself. She looks life in the face. (I think of that free woman of

the West; she stands like the antique Ceres, her hand on the lion's head—the life-tamer.) In the woman who thinks for herself and feels for herself are the force and security of democracy; in such a woman and in such a man—in both and not in one.

We do not know much about nature, but we know one of its immutable laws. It is the law by which each being seeks the conditions favorable to its development. It is the law by which it tends with all its forces to exercise its faculties. It is "against nature," as the old thinkers said, for any being, knowingly and willfully to lessen and cripple itself. It is against nature for a human being to abdicate, knowingly and willfully, the attributes of humanity. It is against nature for a human being to abandon its autonomy. Now by force or fraud—by feud or covin, as the lawyers say—in all the bad past Woman was made to abandon the very thing which constitutes her dignity as a human being: her autonomy. Her force and her faculty were banished—lost to the community. Wherever her force and her faculty are being brought back into the moral and economic universe—wherever she is being permitted to live with

nature and not against it—life is acquiring balance, adjusted form, equilibrium. That is the thing you see.

Woman is justified of her autonomy.

And more and more as her civic education proceeds, she will proclaim and justify herself, both as a voter and as an administrator of the laws. What is noteworthy is that the women who have been elected to public office have been, without exception, merely women. They were not elected as females—not because they were winsome sweethearts or capacious mothers; they were elected because they were human beings of known competency in the way of living. And in public work they have shown (as you would expect) all the hard, defined, rigid, star-like qualities they brought with them when they came down to live in matter for a while.

Do not imagine, for a moment, there is anything fluffy and floating and indecisive about the women in politics and public life. They may flash a bit, and radiate charm and color; so does a prism—but it is a hard thing with clear-cut edges after all. Thus woman.

There was once a woman candidate for president of the United States; it was back in the

last century; her name was Belva A. Lockwood; out of a total of ten million votes she polled two thousand five hundred. There will be a different record one day. And you need not fancy the woman president, when she comes, will be a fluffy soul. Women are too hard-headed to pick upon dubiety as a quality desirable in a stateswoman.

(Men have done that more than once in political history; and having selected a president found he was a mere floating-kidney in the body-politic.)

The die is cast.

The vote is placing in the hands of women their half-share of the responsibility for directing the common life of humanity.

The possession of power, no matter how enormous, does not bring with it inevitably the knowledge how to use it. The ballot is a plaything—or a lever to move the world.

Here is my conclusion: where the women possess this power they have used the ballot as a lever; and their exercise of power has made them better women and made withal a comelier world to live in for all three of us: man, woman, child—the eternal triangle.

X

MATING IN MARRIAGE

ALL these women, young and unafraid, who are justifying their right to human equality, and civic and economic parity, find themselves confronted by the eternal problem of the right relationship of the man, the woman and the child.

They are envisaging life in a new way.

I think one may say with confidence that the old bad way of training and educating girls merely that they might compete successfully in the marriage market is going out, even in the most artificial society. Fewer girls are taught (as the hunting dog is trained to scent and track game) that their business in life is to pull a man down. They are no longer carefully instructed in the smirking art of coquetry. They are not, so often, willfully deformed in order to please man's hectoring love of what is soft and little. (Only a few years ago a fool

proclaimed: "Men of sensibility desire in every woman soft features and a flowing voice, a form not robust, and a demeanor delicate and gentle" —which is like the taste for legless dwarfs and medieval soprani.) Young girls are not taught, so persistently as they were, that their best way to get on in the world is to fasten, leech-like, to a man who is climbing to a hill top. It is not so much dinned into them in the nursery that the most honest way of making a living is to pick a man's pocket—under the protection of a marriage license.

And all this means that the strong, new ideas of woman's inalienable right to her own life and to her own destiny have reached even the nursery and the school.

Even silly women do not think of marriage as, only a few years ago, almost all women thought of it.

One amazing truth has come home to women —and it is, I believe, the most revolutionary truth that has risen in the modern world; this truth: The psychic and physical degradation of loveless marriage equals precisely the psychic and physical degradation of unmarried promiscuity. The corollary is that marrying for money

is exactly the same thing as getting money by any other display of sexual attractiveness. It is just as ignoble. It is on all fours with it. Now this new and splendid truth has risen, as the sun rises, over the world of woman. You may say it is a simple thing. It is a simple thing—simple as the sunlight out of which our share of the universe sucks its nutriment; but it is of immense revolutionary import. You cannot get away from the fact that it imports a readjustment of the sex-relations of man and woman.

What is the sacred thing in this relation?

A marriage license?

That were to degrade humanity to the level of the breeding-stable.

The sacred bond between the male and the female is love and if you put anything else in its place you are creating psychic and physical degradation, no matter by what name you call the relationship.

But the marriage problem remains?

The marriage problem certainly remains.

What is bad in it, as I have tried to show you again and again, is that, in all the past, it has been accompanied with injustice to woman. It

has been a pen to keep the woman in. And she, therein, has grown deformed, sex-specialised, enfeebled, unfit to fulfill her duties to the race and to herself. More and more, as she became femalized and parasitic, she lost touch with the high things of humanity. More and more, she ceased to be a human being and became a thing set apart for sex—for maternity or sex-diversion. Man went on affirming himself as a human being; and—since woman was going the other way—he got further and further away from her. He lost his understanding of her. And the further away she got from the norm of the sane, strong, active human being the less he understood her. And so having made her feeble and foolish and soft and warm —a specialist in sex-attractiveness—he coddled her and despised her and fed her and boasted of her points and pulled her ears. He married her; he lived with her; *but he did not know her.*

How could he know her?

He knew human life and human motives, aspirations, energies, but she was specialized out of humanity.

It is in the give-and-take, in the come-and-go, in the friction of life, that man gets his under-

standing of men. Until recently—until Woman went out into business and politics and the professions—men and women met only in the way of amusement. They met for dancing, eating, talking—for all that made for gallantry. In plain words they met in the Field of Imposture, where each tried to make the other believe in an artificial personality.

The man at a dance is never what he pretends to be.

The woman in a ball-gown is always precisely the opposite of what she pretends to be.

And so these two fools got together. The man, jealously desiring to add to his possessions, the woman, intent upon capturing a provider, they made a match of it—and went rolling down the abyss of psychic anarchy and physical degradation. Their whole trouble was ignorance. They did not know each other and, sadly, in a world where they never met as equals, but only as sex-entertainers, they could not know each other. Human beings can know each other. There can be no rational understanding between a man and a Strasbourg goose.

Marriage, unless it be a noble union of two

equal and understanding individualities, virile and feminine, is merely a licensed infamy. You can't make a decent thing out of it.

Marriage should be the means, for man and woman, of expressing most fully the potency of the individual and guarding, most zealously, the life of the race; and, whenever the woman's power and personality are eclipsed by it, then, also, the life of the race goes into eclipse.

THE DOUBLE STANDARD OF SEX-MORALITY

What are you going to do about it? Civil society, as we know it, is based upon marriage, because it is based upon property. The reformers, who recognize the evils caused by the improper and unjust distribution of property, have seen quite clearly that they cannot reform one without reforming the other. In all their projects for making over the world they attack, with equal energy, the wealth-system and the family-system. Logically they are right; the two systems melt one into the other. And to each of them reform is going to do something. The mistake of the reformers is to imagine they can abolish either system. Evolution, in its

methodic on-going way, never abolishes anything. It changes; it transmutes; it eliminates and perfects; but there are in evolution no wild incoherencies of abolition.

Above all—may I suggest this to the brave men and women of reform?—evolution never, on any plane, abolishes what is imperfect; its endless business is to perfect it—be it cell or species—and only when there is type-perfection does the cell or the species finish its cycle.

There is no use in talking about abolishing marriage; there is an enormous amount of use in talking about abolishing bad marriages.

The immediate work to be done is along the line of getting the defects out of the marriage-system we have inherited, in an evolutionary way, from a confused and difficult past.

You can hardly set it apart as a woman question In fact I am not sure there is a woman question at all; there is only a Man Question—the man who has not done his duty.

The worst defects in the marriage-system grew out of its origin, which was merely sex-subjugation and which brought in its train parasitism, human inequality and sex-specialization. The tendency of social evolution is to

strip marriage of these three nasty excrescences and to perfect, in the existing state, the necessary relation of man, woman and child.

Three things:

First there must be in marriage complete human equality between the two principles, virile and feminine, man and woman. Perfect equality; equality such as Erasmus, that old reformer, proclaimed; and to please myself (and Vassar) I am going to set down here his stiff old-fashioned words: *Ego tibi rex ero, tu mihi regina, imperabimus familiae nostro arbitratu.*

There must be human equality. And this thought might carry us far down a road I shall indicate—as one points to a highway one cannot go to the end of. It leads to the assertion that there can be no longer a double standard of morals for man and woman. I admit that under the accepted marriage system there were —and are—two separate codes of sexual ethics: one for the man and another, of harder rigidity, for the woman. It was a privilege man accorded himself in a man-made and man-directed world. And of all the privileges he arrogated to himself it was the most criminally fruitful

in evil. Of the man himself it made a sex-poisoned animal; and, in addition, it begot dark and hectic daughters who filled the night with the ignominy of laughter and cries. Another evil it trailed with it was the tendency it had to make the married woman herself (eternal victim of the double code) a liar, a hypocrite and a love-thief.

What must be got out of the marriage system, first of all, is the double standard of morals.

Do you remember Svava?

Eh, but it was long ago, back in the last century. And I remember one night in Christiania, at a playhouse, when Svava crossed the stage and flung her glove full in the face of her lover —a double-standard man; we cheered her then and to-day the cheers are running round the world.

Only Svava can drive the swine-minded man, who has given himself a separate and loose code of sexual ethics, back to the sane decencies of life. Only the woman can do it. She alone can throw the glove into his evil face. She alone can ordain that marriage must be based on one standard of sex morals. For generations she

wailed over it and protested against it, but she was utterly powerless to change the man-devised code. Her dependence was too complete. To-day she can do something. And as she becomes more and more independent economically, she can the more successfully insist that—for her at least—the double standard of sex-morality shall not govern. Between her and her man there shall be equal human liberty—that much in her new economic independence she can demand.

There are two codes. The one is a low code of untrammeled sex-indulgence—that for the man; the other is a high code of rigid respect for self and for the purity of the race—that is for woman.

When this double standard is destroyed, which of the codes shall remain?

Must Woman, to find human equality, go down into the sex-gutters where man has been rolling about for ages? Can she haul him up and make him stand soberly on the high clean standard of sexual ethics he insists she shall stand on?

You want my honest opinion?

On all matters of sex, women have always

been more broad-minded than men. They have not been so horribly obsessed by the jealous desire to have sex-property in a mate. Their jealousy is more distinctly food-jealousy, roof-jealousy, born of the fear that their "provider" may be charmed away. I believe the elimination of parasitism—of coop-feeding—will free women, very largely, from the special kind of jealousy they have wasted on their mates. Even now, I repeat, they are far more broad-minded than men. Just so long as men look upon women as females—as sex-chattels—they will wrap them in jealousies and codes of their narrow-minded creation. And I believe (since you insist) that a man had almost rather be decent himself than not have his woman decent. Rather than see her descend from the high code of sex-morality he has placed her on, he would haul himself up there too, and stand beside her —a trifle out of breath and groggy on his legs, dejected and regretting his lost license and supremacy, but still, doggedly, standing beside her.

Mark you, I am not idealizing Woman. She is no heaven-dweller—though she has a star inside her that is hungry to be home. Being

human she has her share of animality. And I am by no means convinced that she likes to stand up there on the high cold code of sex fidelity; I do not know—not having been a woman for a good many incarnations; but one thing I do know; this:

She is not going to stand up there alone any longer.

If man does not crawl up out of his gutter and take his place beside her, I believe she will come down and look about her curiously to see what is going on in the world of the other sex-code. I, for one, shall not blame her; and if this be treason—O, crested male of the night-streets—make the most of it!

She will not stay up there alone. You must either go up and keep her company or she will come down and brawl with you.

Once a woman can feed herself, she is free of the coop and of coop-law, and in the United States alone there are more than eight million self-feeding women. They have got a measure of human equality out in the hard industrial world and men must henceforth meet them in marriage on terms of equal sex-morality.

That is what is coming.

The two codes of sex-ethics have had their day. Whether there is to be leveling up or leveling down is largely dependent upon how decent man is at bottom, and how indecent woman is at heart. My opinion is the marriage relation is even now being adjusted on the plane of the higher code—that the men are going up; but whether the men are going up or the women are coming down you may be very certain that in a world of woman-enfranchisement the double standard of morality is predestined to death and damnation. There is no longer a place for it among human beings, whose duties and rights fall apart into exact and proportional equality.

MARRIAGE AND THE DOOR TO THE STREET

You must get moral inequality out of marriage; you must get parasitism out of it; and you have got to strip it of sex-feathers.

With these reforms the old system will fit with tolerable nicety into the new man-and-woman society which is in the making. It will do its tolerable best for safeguarding the race and furthering individual development. It will no longer be a respectable way of making a

living and getting on in the world. It will no longer be mere sex-payment for roof and fire and food. It will be a mating. It will not be a psychic adventure and it will not be a physical adventure; it will be the union of man and woman—the conjunction of two duties to race and self. The man will not be a predatory animal and the woman will not be a fool with a lot of nasty little sex-tricks—like the poor fool of a girl who is trained for the preface of marriage and not for marriage itself.

And, thus, modern marriage, by one of those reversions common in evolution, will have turned toward the type of marriage defined in the Roman contract *in usu*. What distinguishes it is that it is a contractual union, the duration of which is contingent upon both parties of the contract living up to it. Its duration depends upon the content and consent of both the husband and the wife. They are not held together by forced obedience—which is anarchy *à deux*. The marriage is, in the strict meaning of the word, an agreement.

This is the only form of marriage which will be tolerated in society even half-enlightened and partially enfranchised. Woman coming

into her own, will not stand for anything less than this contractual union; and man might as well make up his mind to it. She is demanding union upon terms of equality and she is going to have it. In that union woman has to look out for two matters of importance; her right to individual development and her duty to the race. If her personal rights are invaded, or if her race-duty is thwarted, it must be within her power to annul the contract. Just so much power and no more is reserved to the man. The contract ceases; and if there be a penalty for the broken contract the penalty lies upon the one at fault, be it husband or wife, but neither the guilty nor the innocent is freed of obligation to the race and the children they have admitted to the race.

The strength of this marriage relation lies in the fact that it is held by two hands. Then it is steady and secure. If one hand lets go it sags and falls.

Marriage as an institution can be preserved only by throwing wide all its doors. You won't find the new, self-respecting woman going into the marriage edifice, if her only way of getting out, should the need arise, is to break the garret

window and slide down a water-pipe—to the scandal and derision of the neighbors. The doors of the edifice must stand wide, that those who went in without compulsion may get out without brawling or window-breaking.

Years ago schoolboys, instead of being locked in dormitories and hounded by proctors, were "put on honor"; and to-day the very convicts in your prisons are "put on honor"; it is time the same system was applied to married men and married women. What ties them together, unwillingly, must be untied. Only in perfect liberty can they get close together. The divorce court, when man or woman asks therein for divorce, has only one duty incumbent upon it. It has not to decide whether the man or woman who asks for freedom shall be set free—that right is already the right of the man and of the woman. The duty of the divorce court is merely to adjust the terms upon which the contract of union is to be annulled.

You, who are old males—strong for other folks' morality—might as well get that clear in your minds.

Woman, at last, has refused to be hooked up

like an animal, halter-broke and trained to go in gear.

She will ride with you in a spirit of lean, friendly equality; she will run with you in the world of sport and wrestle with you, chivalrously, in the world of business; she will make love with you and pray with you; but she will not concede you one fragment of her human birthright. She is bridle shy. Independent and dancing on her heels she backs out of the harness. Some day you'll not be able to hitch her up to your pleasure-buggy and drive her about the streets. I hope that day will come apace. Meanwhile she refuses to look upon marriage as a stable.

The essence of a contract is the fact that it may be broken; *the permanency of marriage is conditioned in divorce.* People try to escape only when they are locked in. Only when there are bars on the windows and locks on the door do they try to break out violently. And if you want sane men and women to dwell together in a seemly marriage house, you must leave the door ajar.

There must be a way out, or no sane man or woman will stay in.

Half the unhappy marriages are due to claustrophobia—this horror of being locked in; and you must build your new home, for the free woman, without locks and without bars. There, with a casement open on the highway, she will sedulously set about her laudable business of being Woman.

XI

LOVE AND CHILDREN

YOU always exaggerate the difficulties and disadvantages of a new position when you view it emotionally.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that men, especially the sociologists and the professors of eugenics, insist upon taking an emotional view of any proposed amelioration, made for the benefit of Woman, in the status of matrimony. I do not know that one could expect anything else, for men, as I have said often enough, are incurably romantic, emotional, sentimental; and when it comes to a sputtering soul it is unquestionably the soul of the scientific man that sputters most furiously. More than anything else it is man's exaggerated, emotional view that stands in the way of the reasonable reform in the marriage relation which would be brought about by the "open door." There is not much argumentation in their talk. What they do,

chiefly, is to ask again and again, with nery, masculine outbursts of moral fervor:

"What of love? What of the sanctity of love? And what of the children?"

They hurl these questions, like harpoons, into the flurried problem.

So be it; let us see what we can make of the sanctity of love; and let us answer reverently the question: What of the children?

I do not say I have found the final answer; in this world of ours, which is in the making, there are no finalities; even the most cock-sure scientist is not dealing with ultimates. The best we can do, in a formative world, which goes on growing out of its social clothes, cut to fit passing needs, is to make honest compromises with life. You know the suit you buy for little Charles-Edward is a bit too big to-day, but you are reasonably sure he will grow into it and plump the waistcoat out. There can be no tragic finality in anything which has to do with laws and regulations of man's making, for they can always be amended. Now the status of matrimony, as defined by decrees of court and acts of legislature, has been shifted a hundred times in the ages. There is nothing sacred

about it. Women, for the most part, see it precisely as it is: A man-made device for assuring to one owner the woman, her offspring, her property and her capacities. And, rather cleverly, as time went on, they twisted it so they got out of it food and decoration and idleness and adoration of a kind. In their practical way women have always seen that this kind of matrimony was really a business matter. Men have always insisted there was something else to it. Both the men and the women were right. Matrimony is a business-like thing; but at the heart of it, as the men saw in their visionary way, is something that has to do neither with laws nor with enactments, something as deep as the urge of the positive and negative currents of life, something so high it touches, mystically, the super-cosmic force.

There is love in marriage.

Indeed love has always stood under it, bearing up the entire creaking, swaying, tottering structure.

Therefore a word about love—with apologies to the eugenists; and by the way, it is a bad sign when a race begins to study eugenics, for it betokens certain decay, just as a man never

begins to talk about his health until he has lost it—but a word about love.

PASSIONAL LOVE AND THE OTHER KIND OF LOVE

Love is the basis of the contractual marriage. At all events love should be. And by love I mean a very special thing. I most distinctly do not mean sex-passion—not even though it be sublimated into a passion for perpetuating the race. It is because this kind of passional love pulls so many people into the marriage-house that the floors thereof are dirty—and the walls thereof are stained. After a while that kind of love wants to get out—whence the need of bars on the windows and locks on the door. You can't tie two passions together and have them go steady for any length. Sex-passion has an immense amount to do with the processes of life; it is a cosmic thing—the urge of two forms of life-matter equal in strength and potency; but it has the fleeting impermanency of all things which can find expression only in matter.

Inevitably, passional marriage is impermanent.

Now our society is largely occupied in making these marriages of sex-passion. The women have been so nurtured and shaped and decorated to emphasize their desirableness as sex-specimens that it is pretty hard, even for the thinking man, to see in them anything but objects of sex-desire. When all this dressing for sex-emphasis is put an end to, men will see women walking about as human beings and (in that blessed day) love may begin from the top down instead of having to work its way up from the bottom—groping from gross matter up to radiant spirit. Passional love, even when you poetize it, is not love—cuddling in the twilight (or strumming guitars in the moonlight, or chanting Alcaics) is not love, though it is a tolerable enough amusement. Fortunately the popular mind is incapable of skepticism, and goes on, after dreary, evanescent, passional experiments, believing in a purer union; which may lead to bigger things. For Love is a bigger thing; and more terrible. It is big and terrible as the cosmic suns; it is filled with the perils and promises of eternity; for it is the meeting of two life-currents on the high permanent plane that lies above the low imperma-

nency of fluctuant matter. The wise Greeks laid Orphic emphasis upon this soul-shaking truth, that if marriage be only an animal union it is changing and perishing—*and should change and perish*—but if it be a spiritual bond it is an unbreakable link with the Oversoul and is connected, mystically, with the supercosmic triad.

When the man who loves meets the woman who loves they need no chains to hold them together. They cannot be kept apart—any more than you can pry the moon away from the earth. For them marriage is indeed a sacrament; on that high altar they are immolated *avec un feu sacré*. The little ties of law-made institutions—*usus, coemptio, confarreatio*—they wear with light acquiescence, because their marriage goes back very far into the old intimacies of time.

It is not for these eternal lovers there need be any readjustment of marriage laws. No matrimonial restrictions chafe them. In fact they would like to be tied together by a hundred new laws—merely to wear them as ornaments and proud insignia of their predestined union.

Marriage laws are made for the passional lovers, whose love—expressed and energized in matter—is of its nature flighty, inconstant and centrifugal. Marriage laws exist solely for the purpose of keeping together in the social interest and for the sake of property and the children, the earthy sort of people. They exist for the protection of the victims of passional and, therefore, impermanent love. That is their only reason for existence. Now what we must see clearly is this:

Is it for the interest of society to keep them together, when, passion-weary, they want to pull apart?

I say no; distinctly no; it is to the interest of society, which is made up of individuals, that they should go their individual ways, striving, as all sane human beings do, to perfect themselves. There should be the door opening on the street. To each the liberty that each one seeks; provided——

Here we come to the rights of property.

I am not greatly concerned that property should be shepherded carefully down the lines of family; but here the law, which makes the passional marriage-ordinances of the earthy

folk, has nothing to do but enforce its decrees regarding property. That is a mere detail of administrative law. The just division of property interests is quite within the capacity of any court, whether it is made up, as at present, of men who sit in gowns, or (I foresee the future) of women who sit in pantalooned decency—*mulieres braccatæ*. And so, I think, we may let that flea stick to the wa'. In these terrestrial marriages the question of property need cause no more trouble than that incident to the dissolution of any other partnership; and if the laws lack justice (to man or woman) they can be trimmed to a finer balance. Merely because there is money in a house is no reason why the house should not have a door. In fact for that kind of man and for that kind of woman the sort of marriage house they need is a roomy edifice, with two street-doors, upon each of which is painted: *"Way Out in case of Fire!"*

But the children?

They have been the eternal victims of passional marriage. They are the victims of discordant marriage, of divorce, and of the lawless passions that prowl on the outskirts of married decencies.

And leaving a door open will not help them very much.

STERILIZING THE POOR AND LOWLY

Passion-pulled lovers go swaggering into marriage as though it were a tavern.

Then children——

Perhaps many children——

The endless stream of babies——

What do you fancy man, looking about his man-made society, and seeing everywhere about him milk-fed evidence that the cosmic process is going on—what do you fancy man finds to say?

I might quote physicians; I might quote judges on the bench; I might quote a few weary women; but just to show the thing at its worst, I shall quote that noisy ventriloquist, Bernard Shaw:

"The artificial sterilization of matrimony is the most beneficial of modern discoveries for the well-being of the community."

You understand?

Man has mismanaged his social organization so absurdly that in a world of ample wealth

and space, there are underfeeding and slum-crowding in one section, while, a few miles up the river, some old man dyspeptic squats in the isolation of a wide park behind a palisade of millions. And because man has muddled things —because he has made life unjust and cruel— he goes sniffing round the slums, exclaiming: "The trouble is there are too many children." He sees the heart-break, hunger, misery, dirt, scandal he has made in the world; he is horribly perturbed, for he is a sentimentalist— even Shaw is a kind of perverted sentimentalist; and he says: "Something must be done about it"; and he calls a congress together and summons all the doctors and sociologists and eugenists and in comes Shaw—a foot-length of grouse-colored hair on his chin; and Shaw takes a little child and sets it in their midst, saying: "Behold, the pale criminal! This monster is responsible for all the social misery, hunger, scandal, crime and degeneration of the community"; whereupon the old doctors and the old sociologists and the old eugenists and the old judges (in gowns) and the passionate young professors howl their hatred of the criminal and his crime; then Shaw picks up his mighty ink-

bottle and bashes the baby's brains out; for——

"It is the most beneficial of modern discoveries for the well-being of the community."

Most beneficial of modern discoveries—reverently, here, I should like to call upon the name of my Creator; irreverently I should like to go out into my garden and swear vilely among the palm-trees—they, too, are busy about the reprehensible business of the life-process. But I shall not take refuge in anger. I shall not even tell George Bernard Shaw that his infamy is a worse infamy than murder, for it is the infamy of soul-killing. He would not know what I meant. He is still squatting in the childish materialism of the last century, when the soul-lessness of man seemed a plausible explanation of the way matter has. One grave, measured word, however, I shall say: Homicide is less loathesome than animicide. The common murderer may have acted on an impulse of drunkenness or wrath; he may repent—anyway he may pay loyally with his own criminal life; he may, in that last moment of repentance, cease to be a murderer; but the cold-blooded Malthusian soul-murderer is always a murderer, day and night, indoors and out, for his

vileness pervades every conscious and unconscious moment of his life. And having made this statement, without anger and without emphasis, I ask you to glance once again at the statistical fool who stands, trying to stop the cosmic process by poisoning the well of babyhood or by closing to the curious, down-swarming monads the gates of life.

Cheer up; I too will give you some statistics.

Living humanity is composed of about one billion, two hundred thousand millions of human beings, the number of men and women being approximately equal at any given time.

Of these there die annually 35,879,520 of both sexes.

Daily there die 98,848 male and female.

In an hour 4,020 die.

In a minute 67 die.

In every second just a fraction more than one human being dies.

Now as these stream out of life there streams in at the other pole precisely the same number of human entities—no more, no less; the cosmic balance is absolute. Life, like a pendulum, swings in and out of matter, steady, unfailing in regularity, ceaseless in activity. When, in

an hour four thousand and twenty human entities pass through the gate of ebony and death, there enter, in that same hour, exactly four thousand and twenty human entities by the ivory gate of birth. It is the out-breathing and in-breathing of the cosmic life. It is balanced and it is eternal.

Do you think the mountebanks can stop its endless flow? That they can check it? That they can vary the rate of influx and efflux by closing sterilely the gates or poisoning the human wells of life? Not even by that one life and a fraction that comes and goes with the second can they alter the eternal balance of life. In and out the mighty force swings, according to a law as immutable as that which sways the cosmic suns.

It is certainly possible "artificially to sterilize matrimony" in certain people—the paupers science keeps, like rabbits, for experiment; it is quite possible; but only blind ignorance could fancy it would stop the ebb and flow of the cosmic tide of life. All this ignorant clamor about sex-control belongs to the maudlin and sentimental science, which reached its climax in the last century and is, fortunately,

dying down with decent rapidity. It has done its worst. You and I, whether man or Woman Emergent, may safely assume it will soon be buried in the grave of filthy and abandoned heresies against life. It is a bad thing to blaspheme against life; and that pseudo-scientific theory of birth-prevention was the foulest blasphemy of all—begotten by the dark and sterile powers of life-denial.

THE SACRED SIGNIFICANCE OF BIRTH

You can't stop the stream of babies—the endless tidal stream of babies that swings in and out of life.

Are they pathetic or absurd—these heady young professors, who have attained the dizzy intellectual heights of Shaw; these earnest little doctors, who are still blasting away in the abandoned quarries of *ante-bellum* science; these idle and compassionate women, who are picturesquely interested in the "lower classes"—pathetic or absurd in their hysterical efforts to stop the rhythmic pulse of the life-force?

Too much water going over Niagara Falls?

Well, you cannot stop it by dipping out a

cupful *above the falls*—not even if you use a sterilized cup.

Therefore, what are you going to do with the baby-stream, in a society that stands erect on the two legs of property and marriage?

Woman, you are the gate of the body, you are the gate of the soul; the right kind of marriage creates for a child the best environment for its especially-needed sort of development. Indeed, in that kind of marriage, life shapes itself into the perfect triangle; it develops all of man and all of woman, with the child standing by as custodian of their future; it reflects, in grosser matter, the supercosmic triad overhead.

I know well enough this is not the marriage the law-makers concern themselves with; and there is no need why they should. In such marriages there is no child-problem, for the problem solves itself; and as women grow out of their sex deformities and men discard their Don-Juanism, those are the marriages that will prevail. Meanwhile we are up against the passional alliances of those who are still at a rather backward stage of evolution. We are up against discordant married folk dodg-

ing through doors of divorce. We are up against the lawless males and lawless females (one has to be very young to believe it is "always the man's fault") prowling together outside the fold of public decency.

Now it is mysteriously true that Woman—even without a wedding-ring—is still the gate of the body and the gate of the soul. Wherever she is, whatever she is, whoever she is in the social organism, still is she, awesomely, the Gate.

Where she is, what she is, who she is—all these are matters society is perfectly justified in busying itself about; it may go just as far as its power permits in drilling her or restraining her. It may even make laws about the way she shall fulfill her duty to the conservation of race. In fact, since we are socially organized animals, our society may do what it pleases with us, so long as it does not interfere with the cosmic law. Now society may decree that all race-mothers shall dress in yellow petticoats or wear rings in their ears; there is only one thing it cannot do—stop that condition of earth-life which is a result of the positive and negative currents of life. In other words, it cannot,

in spite of pseudo-science, alter the equilibrium of life and death. Babies will keep on coming. This law is cosmic. They come by a mandate higher than that of man-made law.

They come through the Gate.

When once man has got it into his wanton head that the body of Woman is a temple and not a tavern, there will be no more trouble about the babies.

As it is the children, adventuring into life, come through the Gates, whether they are sacred or profane. They come through the gates of the tavern, even as they come through the gates of the temple.

And you and I, their contemporaries in life, have only one imperative duty: To stand with drawn swords round the cradle.

That is all; "what, ho, here is a new human being—on guard!"

Practically I don't care a hang what you do to the woman—run-away wife, tainted divorçée, lawless prowler and thief of love; you may boil her in oil or put her in the pillory, if that is the kind of thing your society enjoys; but what you cannot do is lay your mucky hand on the child. It is not guilty of breaking any of your

good and proper laws. And society's implacable duty is to stand round the bedside where a child is born with swords drawn for its protection and with trumpets singing a welcome.

(I don't know how the average mother would like this sort of display in her bedroom; perhaps I should explain I was writing in a figurative way.)

Here is the point: If the child is not welcomed into life and protected in a marriage-status, then must society give the welcome and the protection outside the house of marriage.

"Oh, we have asylums!" you say.

I am going beyond that. It is true society must give fire, food and roof to those children for whom the gates of life have opened upon destitution and lovelessness; but it must do more—it must see to it, haughtily, that no obloquy lies upon the child because it was born in one street rather than another. And it is to the Emergent Woman I look to set this thing right. The cosmic process is not much concerned with ordinances and conventions, but society is vastly concerned therewith; and the child born (shockingly) without benefit of clergy, must be born to all the social rights of

his fellow-adventurers in life. What we must abandon is the cowardly habit of laying the sins of the fathers—and our sins—on the head of the child.

One of the first things the Emergent Woman will do is to set this matter right.

You know, because you have read, the famous "article eleven," which Olympe de Gouges flung in the face of revolutionary France. I said, you may remember, that if it were not the ultimate solution it opened a way to it. Now precisely that "article eleven" of Olympe's social contract has been proposed as a law in the strong and progressive state of Illinois. It is known as the Castberg law; "it gives the illegitimate child its father's name, makes it share equally with his legitimate children, if any, and provides care and protection for the mother preceding the child's birth."

Olympe went a trifle further; and, personally, I should go with her to the end of her thought: *that our property belongs directly to our children, of whichever parent they are born*—the property and the name, for in a snobbish society names counted. It was in my destiny, shortly before the war, to speak at a feminist meeting

in Paris and I was heckled about this very matter of names. I still believe it is along the line of the answer I gave, the Emergent Women will solve the problem. It was something like this: The child's right to the name of its parents is inalienable. I believe the marriage name, ere long, will be an equally balanced composite name—that of the husband and wife. For example when Mr. Lancaster marries Miss York the name of that family will be Lancaster-York. That is the public name—the name of that partnership—the name of that little social organization of two human beings who are equally free and equally bound. The name Lancaster-York defines the social status of the man Timothy Lancaster; it proclaims that he is married; it announces that he is married to one of the York tribe; and in a similar way it sets forth in detail what Angelina York has done in the way of marriage. The mere fact that a man's name, for all purposes of public and social life, is Lancaster-York makes it at once evident that he is in partnership with a woman, and is not on the loose. (An advantage in a society that keeps truth in a well.)

And now the children:

The children born of this union are all little Lancaster-Yorks; the name defines their legal status.

And if the man or woman should, by divorce or adultery, go outside the union? If Lancaster meets Miss Tudor? Then the child, if a child be born of that union—legalized or non-legalized—will bear honorably the name Lancaster-Tudor. And should the woman, Angelina York, have a child by some one other than Lancaster, it would bear the real father's name and her name; it would be, for example, Plantagenet-York.

You will understand I am not touching upon that sacred and mystic thing—the real name each one of us bears mysteriously through the life-journey in matter; I am referring to business names, to open, public, social-partnership names; and it is to such a name the child has an inalienable right—he is heir of the partnership.

I leave this suggestion to the Women Emergent. It is one of the problems they must solve. As they assert their economic and matrimonial freedom, as they go triumphantly toward the new society, they must take the children—all the children—with them.

There are moments that hold all the future, because they contain all the past; and such a moment is the birth of a child—any child, every child.

What? The coming into life of a little noetic monad? Yes; for in his baby hand he holds all the future of the race. He is the messenger of Phanes, the Manifestor. And I hail Woman's entrance, as a peer, into the rule and government of earth-life, because I know that she will indeed guard—with drawn sword—the sacredness and honor of that life.

She will have none of man's silly and criminal way of muddling the babies out of life; she will, instead, make a fair, large room for them in it. Already she has taught man a little of the spiritual significance of marriage; she must teach him also the sacred significance of the birth of a little child—the monad, holding in its tiny hand the seed of immortality.

WHAT WOMEN MEAN TO HAVE

And so, as clearly as I could, without cant and without moral excitement—for moral fervor is a good torch to fire hayricks with but

gives a bad light to study by—I have tried to show you a little of what Woman has suffered and been, a little of what she is doing and, above all, her aspiration toward new destinies. *Ego non sum in causâ.* This is Woman's book and it is mine only in so far as I have become, sincerely and loyally, her partner in humanity.

I have not created ideas; I have recorded them—for what is in this book is in the heart and is in the brain of every woman to-day. Some women can but feel it, obscurely, with vague rebellion. But more and more it is becoming an active and directing part of woman's thought. And her day and her hour are near—very near at hand. In a little while the strongest statements in this book—what I have said, what Olympe said, what Erasmus said—will be commonplaces; and the theories be as common as the laws of sunlight or motion.

And what are these things the Emerging Woman, with her leonine "I shall," is demanding?

That you may know, let me state them, one after the other:

First, human equality; right and opportunity for the fullest self-development, physical and

mental; the same education and training given man; every door open to her; and with this comes the abolition of all sex-advertisement—she must no longer be compelled to wear those garments which serve merely as sex-badges, marking her off from our common humanity.

Second, industrial equality; every field of labor, physical and mental, must be open to her; and her wage and reward must be in proportion to the work done—payment without regard to sex; the equal wage.

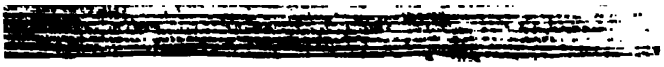
Third, civic equality; for this alone will guarantee and make secure her personal liberty and her industrial equality; only when she is to be reckoned with as a voter can she be sure of her other rights; and, in a larger measure, the destinies of humanity depend upon her collaboration in the rule and conduct of public affairs.

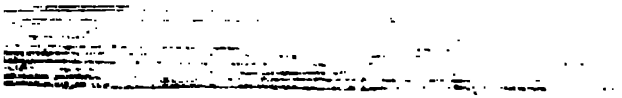
Fourth, an equitable partnership-contract with man, which will enable her to fulfill her duty to the race, without yielding up her equally cogent duty to herself; and with this opening wide of the doors and windows of the marriage house must come a sterner legal regard for the children—for that is the one and sole duty society has in the matter, having abso-

lutely nothing to do with the prefaces to birth, being concerned only with the child and its inheritance, be it of money, of honor, of name.

This, in brief and rigid outline, is the demand of Woman.

These are the things she has affirmed; these things her will is creating—*sic fata ferunt.*





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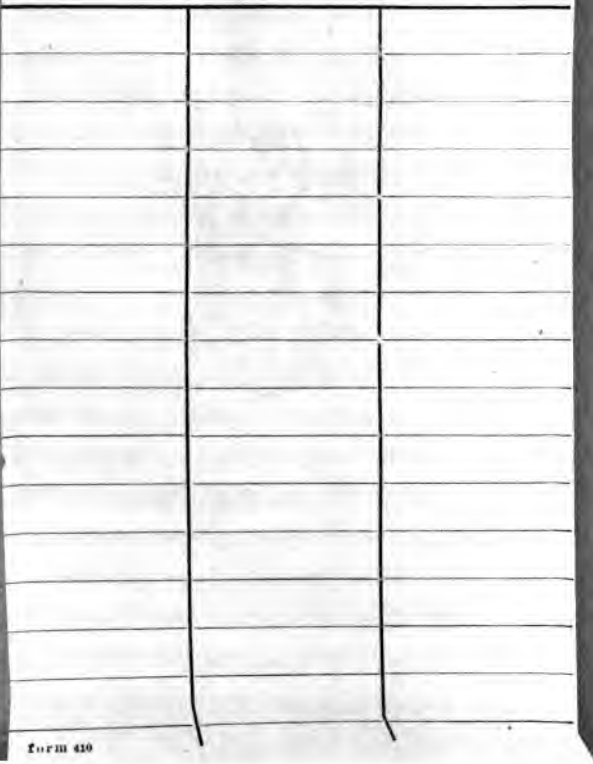

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